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SEPTEMBER 2018

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Reader's digest TICKETS

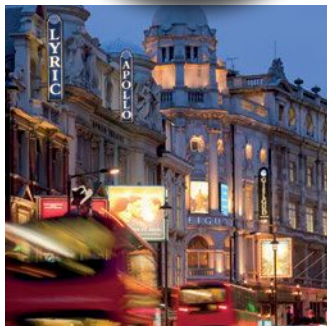
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In This Issue...



We all have bad habits—perhaps you bite your nails, spend hours on Facebook or drink too many sugary mocha-frappuccinos—but when does a bad habit become a cause for concern? We took nine habits to a panel of experts on p58 to ask a question that's kept us all awake at some point: is my behaviour normal or nuts? From a case of chronic indecisiveness to a hatred for hugs, you may find your quirks are more common than you think. One bad habit we're all guilty of is not listening enough. On p52, Doctor Max Pemberton takes some time out from his rounds to listen to the memories of a Second World War veteran—it's a moving reminder of how much we stand to gain from listening to the lessons of the past.

Anna

Regardless of how you spent the summer of 2018, there's one thing we can all agree on: it's been sweltering. The hot and dry weather which hit the UK and most of continental Europe—bringing about wildfires and wreaking havoc on farming—is undoubtedly linked to global warming, according to scientists. Will we ever be able to gain control over the climate? According to Chris Menon, we might. As he suggests on p81, there are potential ways of artificially cooling the planet as an emergency measure, but the moral and practical implications are huge. For now, managing pollution through human behaviour is our best bet; we need to reduce our carbon emissions, and we need to do it fast—otherwise, the extreme weather is here to stay.



Eva

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Over to You

LETTERS ON THE JULY ISSUE

We pay **£50** for Letter of the Month and **£30** for all others

Letter of **THE MONTH**

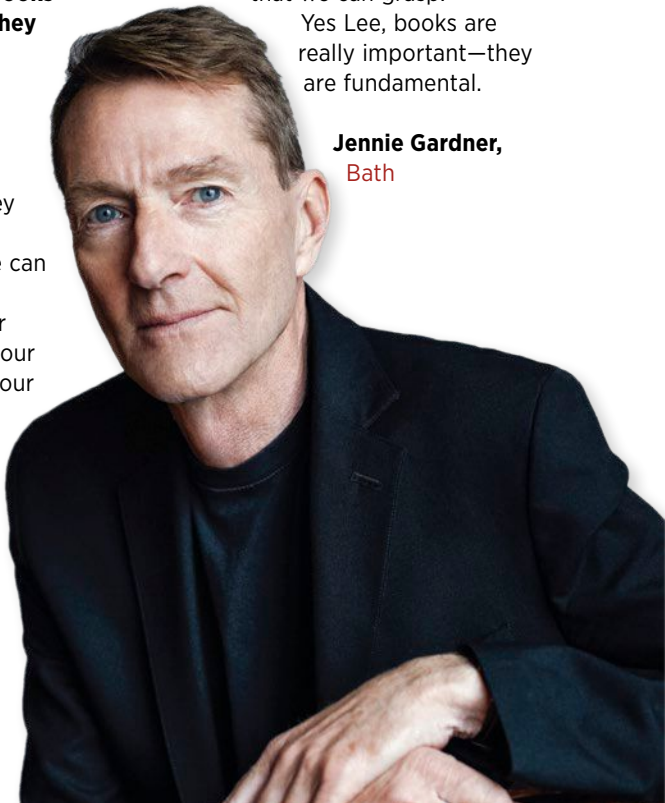
I couldn't agree more with Lee Child, that books are really important. Yes, you can get lost in them but you can also find yourself and new worlds and possibilities in them. Books help us to forget and they help us to remember. They remind us both of what's really important and what's trivial.

And, as Lee says, they let us hold the whole world in our hands. We can feel the weight of this world, we can mark our favourite spots, add in our own thoughts and see our progress through the pages as the story leads us back home, allowing us to re-find ourselves along the way. We cannot

remain indifferent. Every book changes us, impressing itself upon us, adding weight, wisdom and a certain wistfulness to our lives, a weight wisdom and wistfulness that we can grasp.

Yes Lee, books are really important—they are fundamental.

Jennie Gardner,
Bath



As a huge fan of the Jack Reacher novels, I was thrilled to read author Lee Child's, comments in the "If I Ruled The World" feature. I was most impressed that he wanted to make teachers the most respected and highest paid professionals.

I work as a teaching assistant in a primary school and have done so since my youngest daughter began school 12 years ago. Until then I had no idea just how much planning was involved in each lesson and how much patience is required in a class of 30 children! I also agree with Lee that books should be protected—there's nothing more rewarding than finishing a good book and then—of course—deciding what to read next.

Melanie Lodge,
West Yorkshire

While Lee Child is a talented author, he clearly doesn't have the same expertise in the field of politics.

A constitutional monarchy is the best form of government, as it allows the head of state to be a unifying figure, standing above politics, yet merely by existing prevents divisive, and possibly authoritarian, politicians from achieving supreme power.

In addition, Mr Child is naive about the BBC. While once a national treasure it now presents a biased view on many issues, in particular, Brexit and global warming. It has become a mouthpiece for the metropolitan liberal elite and it's damaging the country by its instinctive support of those who attempt to deprecate our nation.

Colin Bullen,
Kent

BLESSED BY BRIAN

Brian Blessed's "I Remember" was most enjoyable. I love Brian, a charismatic and popular actor of stage and screen. It was interesting to learn more about his life. I noted how he enjoyed being involved in the Space Programme, doing 600 hours training in Moscow and I have to agree with his thought: "We need to get out there (to Mars) because the Earth has got to rest." Mars has always been a source of inspiration for explorers and scientists. Robotic and scientific robotic missions have shown that Mars has the characteristics and a history similar to Earth's, but we know that there are striking differences that we have yet to begin to understand.

Jayne Wile,
North Wales



OVER TO YOU

I loved reading Brian Blessed's "I Remember" in July's *Reader's Digest*. Brian is one of Britain's most loved actors and his reminiscences prove there's a lot more to him than a booming voice (though that's quite a trademark quality which has served him well).

His recollections of celebrities as diverse as Peter O'Toole and Agatha Christie were fascinating and insightful. Brian has a warmth and a vivid

imagery to his memories, particularly regarding his father, and a strong admiration for the mining community of his youth that shines through.

He expresses astonishment that a lad from a working-class background could make it in the acting profession but sadly that concern is probably even truer today.

David Dunlop,
Tyne and Wear



INSTANT GRATIFICATION

Olly Mann is wrong ("It's A Mann's World," July 2018) about coffee in hotels and their bedrooms. Not all of us like the stuff he purports to prefer which is foisted on us and for which we are charged a small fortune.

I much prefer a good instant, although I agree that Nescafé is not the best. My gripe with hotels is that they only provide two sachets of instant in the rooms and only two sachets of brown sugar. Reasonably fine if you are the sole occupant, but what if two of you want more than one cup! Oh, and don't get me started on those milk pots...

Richard Alexander,
Kent

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WE WANT
TO HEAR
From You

‘What’s your recipe for a happy old age?’ somebody asked me the other day, rashly assuming that I was enjoying one, and I could only answer enigmatically, as I always do, ‘Be kind!’

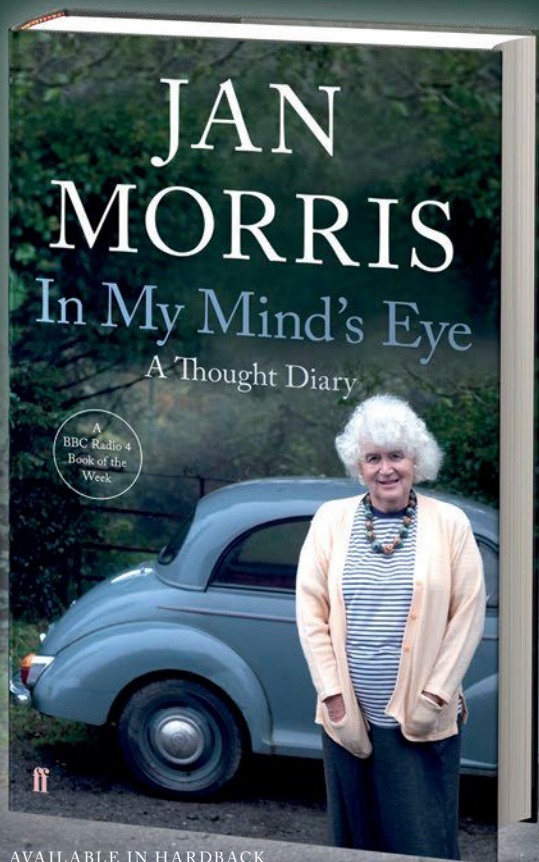
‘Jan Morris has written some of my favourite books of the last five decades.’

MICHAEL PALIN

‘We are lucky to have Jan Morris and her gift of transporting us to other realms.’

SALLY VICKERS

One of our finest travel writers, historians and journalists of the last half-century shares her thoughts on the world and her place in it. From cats to cars, travel to home, music to writing, it’s a cornucopia of delights from a unique literary figure.



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See the world
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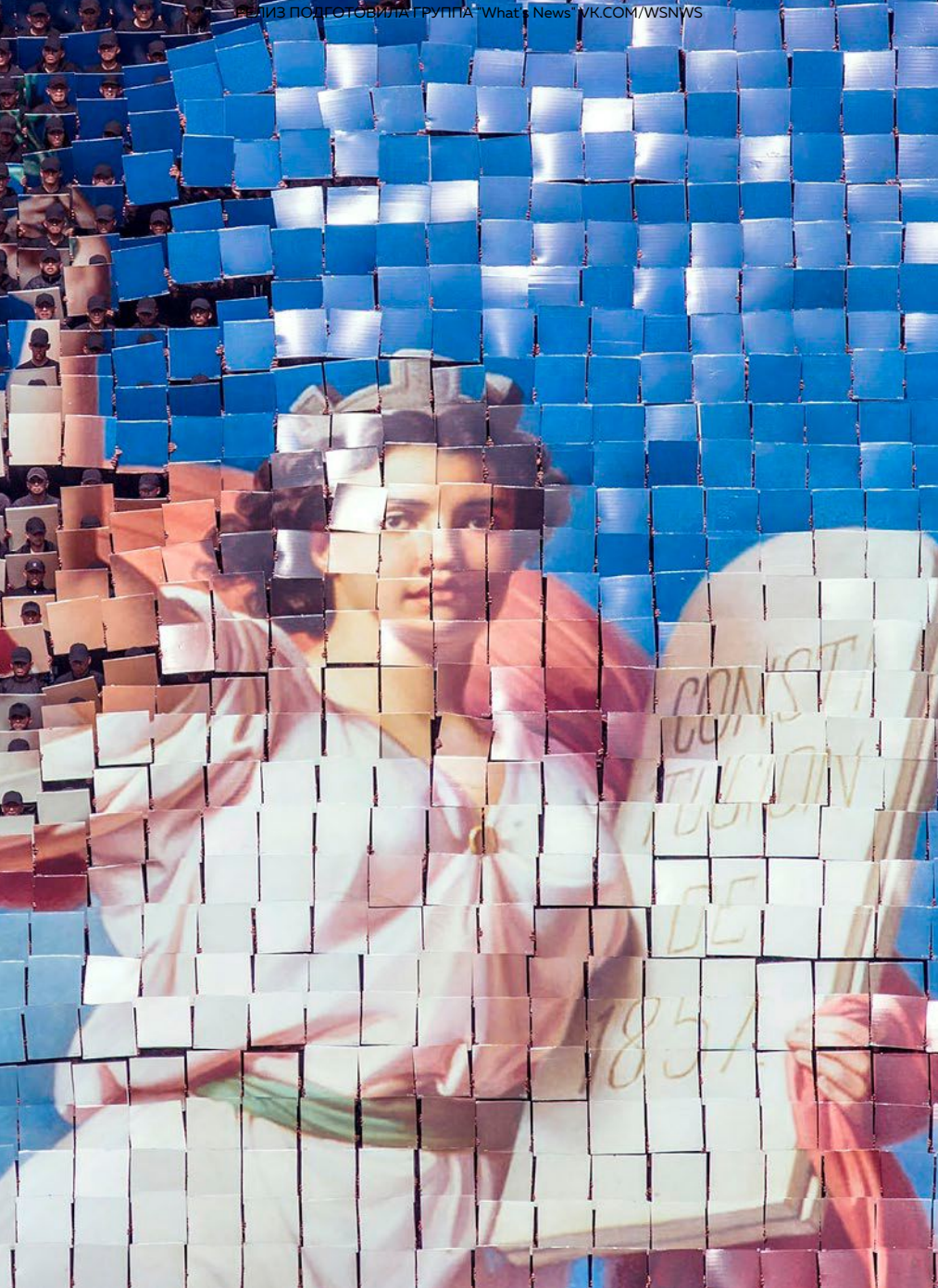


...differently

Hundreds of soldiers melding into one huge painting? In Mexico that's exactly what happened last fall. On September 16, the nationals commemorate their independence from Spain with numerous celebrations across the country. The capital, Mexico City, annually hosts a massive military parade and last year, the soldiers used square boards to form a humongous copy of the painting "Alegoría de la Constitución de 1857" (Allegory of the Constitution of 1857) by Petronilo Monroy.



PHOTO: © PICTURE ALLIANCE/DANIEL CARDENAS



IT'S A MANN'S WORLD

Maybe, More Is More

Sometimes size *does* matter, as Olly Mann's latest home improvement mission proves...

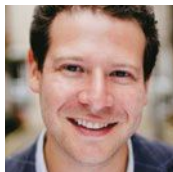
I am the owner of a new television. Well, I say owner; I bought it on 0% interest, so technically it's still owned by a financial services company. But it's in my sitting room, alongside my photo albums, and my fireplace, and our old sofa with the cat's claw marks up the side, so it certainly feels like mine.

Our old TV was adequate, but it wasn't "smart", so an ever-swelling bundle of wires hung out the back of it. Compared to the paper-thin screens you find on even the cheapest tellies these days, it was also comparatively chunky. We'd just done up our house, and understandably wanted to complete

the look with a smart, thin TV. Svelte intelligence is desirable. The focal point of our swish new living space must not be a fat dunce.

So, thin and smart: this much we knew. We also wanted to spend no more than £1500, but, this budget having been set, there was of course no serious likelihood we'd spend any less. (When the time came, we traipsed around the store looking at all the discounted models until we found one we liked with a reduced price of exactly £1500. So, we felt like we were getting a bargain, even though we were actually maxing our budget. Psychology!)

What we hadn't agreed on was size. Frankly, I was torn. Big TVs are all the rage now, but Dad led the charge in the 1980s, and I still bear the scars. Whilst my schoolmates perched over weeny microwave-sized TVs, with nowt to watch but four terrestrial broadcasters, my father, a self-made man with simple



Olly Mann presents *Four Thought* for BBC Radio 4, and the award-winning podcasts *The Modern Mann* and *Answer Me This!*



pleasures, invested in not one but two satellite receivers, Betamax, and a simply enormous rear-projection unit made by Grundig. It was housed in a giant wooden cabinet, and, with the press of a inch-long button, it would emerge from its case with stealth and poise. I used to invite friends round just to watch it pop up and down. It must have cost thousands. It was like something a James Bond baddie would have in his lair.

But even as a child I sensed there was something brash and Yuppieish about this. More sophisticated families—those with actual books on their shelves, rather than coffee-table tomes and car magazines—seemed to believe that any screen larger than a broadsheet newspaper was the height of vulgarity. A TV may be necessary to watch the news or the snooker but to enlarge the visuals to wall-filling size was simply naff, like having a personalised numberplate. One did not live in the Odeon. TVs should be heard, but not seen.

My in-laws are like this. They have, in recent years, purloined a reasonably decent telly, but I suspect if the government hadn't insisted upon digital switchover, they'd still be goggling the same measly box they were in 1985. Even now, their telly is relegated to the far corner of their living room, as if it's something they wheel out occasionally, like a hostess trolley or a ping-pong table,

rather than the entertainment device to which they surrender for five hours most evenings.

But I understand their snobbery. My little cottage is 120 years old—youthful by British standards, but still an environment where a gargantuan screen seems out of place; almost Steampunk. So, like I say, I was torn. I wanted a screen big enough to dazzle me during *The Greatest Showman*, yet small enough that when the Prime Minister addresses the nation it doesn't feel like Big Brother is watching me.

The store we went to—a vast electronics warehouse on a sprawling retail park—was, in itself, enormous. You lose all sense of scale in there. It's like trying to buy a bicycle in an aircraft hanger. In there, a 40-inch television looks like



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"Dad's giant television was like something that a James Bond baddie would have in his lair..."

a postage stamp. A 50-inch screen seems modest. Even a 65-incher seems a plausible candidate.

We ended up plumping for a 55-inch, because—in there—it felt like a reasonable, middle-of-the-road option. The first warning that perhaps we'd gone A Bit Big was when I couldn't fit the box in our car—a family estate, which comfortably holds three suitcases. I had to go and borrow a van just to take it home.

Once it was *in situ*, the packaging torn into bits and dumped in a skip, I realised we had, in fact, made a mistake. *The News At Ten* looked like an IMAX movie. Alistair Stewart came on and I screamed.

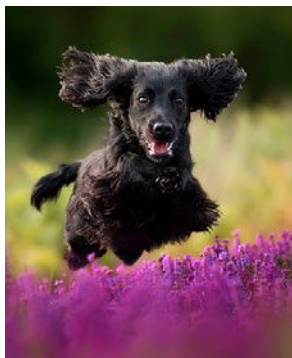
My wife's parents came over for tea, and despite their apparent positivity, yes, I could tell they were judging us.

But, what can I say, I've grown to love my mammoth screen. It is, definitely, too big (50 inches was our true destiny, hey-ho). But I've gotten used to it. And now I've tasted the delights of true home cinema, I don't want to turn back. Dad never lived to see Ultra HD, but wow, would he have loved it!

So, decry my *déclassé* home stylings all you like. I won't hear you over our soundbar, anyway.

PHOTOGENIC PUPS

These adorable canine candid photos are contenders for Dog Photograph of the Year 2018



(via dogphotographeroftheyear.co.uk)

• ENTERTAINMENT



LIONSGATE

John Hannah: “Most Actors Are Easily Hurt”

BY ANNA WALKER

The Scottish actor opens up about his serendipitous rise to fame, the perils of fatherhood in the 21st century, and his latest sci-fi film, *Genesis*

“I kind of felt like the nuclear war would be a better option.”
John Hannah, 56, shudders as he recounts the cold days he recently spent crammed in a nuclear bunker in Essex. He was shooting for his latest project, apocalyptic sci-fi flick *Genesis*, in which he plays the charismatic Paul Brooks, leader of an increasingly desperate group of nuclear war survivors.

“The location had an effect on everyone. The shelter was operational until the mid-Nineties and it still had a lot of the original artefacts. It’s open to the public now;

boy scouts go and spend the night in the bunks. It’s all very depressing, to be honest...”

THAT TRADEMARK SCOTTISH lilt trails off. John is clearly an actor who takes his work home with him.

After his break-out role as the grieving, WH Auden-poetry-reading Matthew in 1994’s *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, John Hannah’s rise through Hollywood was fast. It was perhaps his turn as romantic lead opposite Gwyneth Paltrow in *Sliding Doors* four years later, however, that really propelled him to global

MOST ACTORS ARE EASILY HURT

“We’re in exactly the same position now—look at these muppets in charge who are taking us over the edge of a cliff”



fame. In *Sliding Doors*, two parallel realities unfold in tandem, to show how a minute decision altered the path of the heroine's life. John's own *Sliding Doors* moment was the very thing that launched his career.

"I wanted to go to college because I was a bit lost. I didn't know what to do and the day of the audition [for the prestigious Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama] I happened to be off work. So, I decided I would go in and do it and I was accepted. I wasn't trying to be an actor, I thought I'd be a student for a while and work out what I wanted to do while I was there. I suppose that was one of those moments. I could have walked into the audition, or I could have said, 'Ah, nah, forget it.' It changed my life."

I ponder for a moment if John would fare as well as his *Genesis* character in a real-life Armageddon, but he's quick to laugh off the idea. "[I wouldn't cope] well! I like my comforts! There's not a lot to be said for surviving a nuclear detonation, I'd just want to get it over with."

If he can't relate to his character, he can see parallels in the threats of irresponsible leadership that drive much of the film's action.

"We may not have been thinking about it when we were filming, but when you see the end result you think, *Christ, we're in exactly the same position now*. Look at these muppets in charge who are taking us over the edge of a cliff!"

John's character in *Genesis* is the father to a somewhat wayward



John with his wife Joanna Roth. (Top left); With Viva Bianca at Comic-Con 2010. (Right); as Paul Brooks in *Genesis*

daughter (Amrita Acharia), embroiled in her own personal battle against the raging nuclear war outside and the intense politics of the surviving humans inside. Does John see himself as a protective father? He has twins, Gabriel and Astrid (14) with his wife, actress Joanna Roth.

"I think having children changes your perspective on any kind of situation. Obviously, it's heightened by an end of the world scenario," he laughs, "but in any kind of situation you want to be able to help your children make the right choices. Though, of course, they'll always want to make their own choices regardless, that's sort of the only way they can really learn. I'm learning how to cope with being ignored," he chuckles.

“There’s nothing worse than having a dream that gets deflated by a director who doesn’t know what they’re doing”

As it turns out, being a world-renowned actor doesn’t win John any more cool-points with his kids than the rest of us. “They find me just as embarrassing as everybody else does.”

“From a teenage perspective [my job is] just not that interesting. They don’t really sit there and watch old films and television, they’re on their laptops instead streaming Netflix or looking at YouTube and surfing on Instagram. They integrate with life totally differently from how we did. In terms of sitting together and watching a show on TV and talking about it, they just don’t do that.”

ALTHOUGH HE’S KNOWN FOR making diverse career choices—from the comedic relief as *The Mummy’s* Jonathan Carnahan, to the psychotic Batiatus in *Spartacus*—John insists that it’s never been deliberate.

“I think I basically just get bored

of doing one thing and want to do something else. I’ve done quite a lot of sci-fi recently so I’m kind of feeling like maybe I’d like to do something a bit more real, you know, people talking to each other and going through some s**t and stuff.”

Are there any other roles he still longs to play?

“There’s a lot of stuff [I’d like to do] but I don’t really long for it in that way because if you spend a lot of time longing then when it *does* happen it will be disappointing. There’s nothing worse than having a dream that gets deflated by a director who doesn’t know what they’re doing or whose opinion you disagree with, so I just take things as they come.”

“I have a very busy life at the moment with two kids and schools and all of that. I’ve been doing this long enough that I can pick and choose a little bit and do things because I want to do them and I’m



EAMONN M. MCCORMACK / STRINGER

MOST ACTORS ARE EASILY HURT



John with Andy Whitfield and Lucy Lawless at a Starz press conference in 2010

happy with that. I don't have any unfulfilled ambitions to play Hamlet or any of that stuff."

IT WAS IN THE AFOREMENTIONED role in *The Mummy* that John met the actor whose process he most admires—the film's lead, Brendan Fraser. Formerly one of Hollywood's brightest stars, Brendan dropped off the map shortly after the success of the franchise. In the past year it's come to light that this was at least in part down to his experiences as a victim of sexual assault, something he opened up about in February of this year, encouraged by the increasingly vocal #MeToo movement.

"Brendan is incredibly free," John enthuses. "He has no self-censoring button, he offers everything. And I think that's a really good way to work because you're giving the director the material with which to then weave their canvas and they can then make choices in the edit. I think that's the important thing about [making a film], it's a journey and if you're basically just doing what you thought you were doing on the first day then I think you've lost the point of the journey. We all set off on this journey and ideally, we want to get somewhere we didn't know we were going. Brendan does that really, really well."



“Most actors I know are emotional and romantic, generally pretty sensitive and easily hurt”

DESPITE DIFFERENT APPROACHES

to their craft, one thing John considers himself to have in common with his fellow actors is a romantic disposition.

“Everybody’s different but actors do tend to be [romantics]. Whether they have their emotions nearer to the surface *because* they’re actors, or that’s *why* they become actors I’m not really sure. But most actors I know are emotional and romantic, and they’re generally pretty sensitive and easily hurt.”

“I think you do get better at ignoring criticism or not going looking for it but there are times when you can’t help seeing or being aware of what they’re saying about your film. I remember the director Michael Caton-Jones saying, ‘No one sets out to make a bad film,’ and that’s really true.”

“Sometimes for whatever reason, things just don’t come together. You can take exactly the same formula for last year’s out-of-the-box huge hit and put it all together and it still doesn’t work. It takes something special. It’s intangible...”

He takes a pause, perhaps reflecting on that strange alchemy that forged his own unforgettable hits and occasional critical misses.

“It’s all very well to say, ‘I don’t read the criticism,’ or ‘It doesn’t bother me,’ but of course it does. If you see something that’s painful, criticism stings.”

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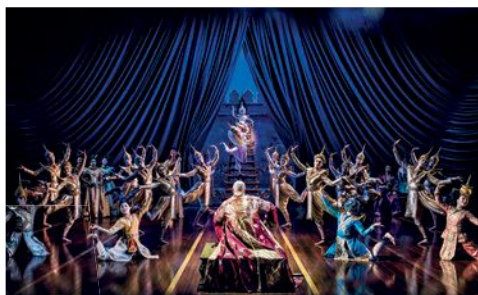
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AMAZING
**COMPLETE
RAPTURE'**

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Janet Ellis

I REMEMBER...

Television presenter **Janet Ellis**, 62, is best known for her stint as a *Blue Peter* host during the 1980s. Now an author, her debut novel, *The Butcher's Hook* launched to critical acclaim in 2016.

...WHEN I WAS ABOUT TWO THERE WAS A FLOOD IN THE HOUSE. I think a washing machine had overflowed or something. I remember my favourite teddies being hung up to dry in the kitchen by their ears, and wanting them back.

...BEING AN ARMY KID. I was born in Chatham but I didn't spend very long there because my parents moved several times over the next few years. I went to seven different schools so it was a typical army childhood. Army children are a great breed because they are so used to being dropped into new places and having to make the best of it. You don't necessarily move neatly at the end of the school term and you often

join schools in the middle of things when people were already in established friendship groups and knew where the loos were.

...MY DAD WAS A CAPTAIN IN THE ROYAL ENGINEERS. My mum had been a nurse before they got married and then when I was 16 she went back to work as a nursery nurse in a local school. I think in those days army wives weren't really encouraged to do anything. They were homemakers.

...WEIRDLY, YOU COULDN'T HAVE TOO MANY BIG TOYS, BECAUSE EVERYTHING had to be packed up. My sister, who is two years younger and I had bicycles, but I've always





Janet Ellis was always on the move during her childhood

wanted a piano in the house even though I never learned. We were really big fans of dolls houses so we made our own. They were rough and ready. We built them in cardboard boxes and made very tiny furniture for them—everything was miniature. We were obsessed with them.

...THERE WASN'T MUCH OUTSIDE SPACE IN ARMY QUARTERS BUT WE ALL PLAYED OUTSIDE. I wasn't aware that we were restricted by space because the doors were open I was always in and out of everybody else's houses. There's a sense of instant connection with army kids, which you don't get anywhere else.

...ONE OF MY PARENTS' FIRST POSTINGS WAS IN ENGLAND. They bought our house in Kent and my sister and I used to roam the countryside in the way kids did in those days. That's something that

"Now, if I don't spend at least part of my day outside, I don't enjoy it very much"



I would very much like to get back to—that feeling of space and the outdoors and green. And now, if I don't spend at least part of my day outside, I don't enjoy it very much.

...MY CHILDHOOD DREAM WAS THAT I WAS GOING TO BE AN ACTRESS, long before I even knew what that was. I remember learning things and saying them aloud and being characters when I played. I went to see a production of *Peter Pan* with Alastair Sim playing Captain Hook and I absolutely loved it. At five years old I just knew what I wanted to be—I wanted to be on stage. I thought, *yes, that's me*.

...I DIDN'T THINK MY SCHOOL DAYS WERE THE BEST OF MY LIFE, THAT'S FOR SURE. I was aware that things were going to be better when I was an adult. I had plenty of friends and I was very social kid, but I always

felt I was waiting for the next bit. I had a very strong sense of that.

...AUDITIONING FOR THE CENTRAL SCHOOL OF SPEECH AND DRAMA.

It was fantastic when I eventually got a place for the audition—you spent a whole day and people were rooted out, *X-Factor* style. I learned I had secured a place at something like 7.30pm and we had started at nine in the morning. It was exhilarating, absolutely exhilarating.

...THE FIRST YEAR OF DRAMA SCHOOL WAS TOUGH as they're sort of breaking you down. It's a very small cohort and you know the people in the year above and below you really well because you're all so into each other's company. In the final term, I was approached by an agent and, within three weeks of leaving, I had a part in a television, in *Jackanory Playhouse*. I knew it was

I REMEMBER...

lucky, because it got me an agent, a telly part and an equity card all at the same time—the Holy Grail.

...I WAS IN THE CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME JIGSAW and someone said, "You're really natural speaking to the camera—do you think you might try presenting?" Initially, of course I thought, *How dare you?* But I thought maybe I'd try it because as an actress, there's no such thing as continual employment and I thought it would broaden my chances a bit.

I went to see an agent and she said, "Well, I think Sarah Greene is leaving *Blue Peter*."

I said straightaway, "There's absolutely no way I want to do that because after you've done that you're always a presenter". But she persuaded me to audition and when I was offered the job I didn't hesitate—it just felt right.

...THERE WERE PLENTY OF FUNNY MOMENTS, BUT I ALWAYS LIKED THAT SIDE OF LIVE TELEVISION.

One time we [featured] a lovely book where a cat had had kittens and the owner had given them away to different homes. She was a photographer and over the year, she followed these cats and took lovely photos of them in their various homes—really delightful—and she came on to the programme to reunite all these kittens.

You rehearse with them in boxes

"My childhood dream was to be an actress, long before I even knew what that was. At five years old I just knew I wanted to be on stage."

because you want to save the moment when they're back together for the cameras, but they just went for each other. One disappeared into the lighting rig. It was awful and wonderful at the same time.

...I HAD THE CHANCE TO SEE AMAZING THINGS ON *BLUE PETER*.

I sang at the *Last Night of the Proms*, with the BBC symphony chorus and of course *Blue Peter* has never been denied access anywhere. People just had an idea for a film or something comes up and everybody welcomes you, which is just amazing and wonderful. It was a real privilege.

...THE CAMARADERIE ON *BLUE PETER* WAS REAL and I was lucky because I've met other presenters,



Posing with Peter Duncan and Simon Groom ready to name the eight puppies of *Blue Peter*'s dog, Goldie

for whom it was just a job and that's exactly as it should be. They don't necessarily have to think it was the best job ever but as it turns out the people I worked with are still really good friends.

...BREAKING MY PELVIS WHEN I WAS TRAINING FOR A FREEFALL ON *BLUE PETER*. I also sustained a horrible injury to the inside of my mouth. I'm not a very brave person physically. I knew that obviously there were risks involved but I was training with the RAF Falcons and they know what they're doing. And, it is such an amazing thing to do—something that takes you so out of yourself. It's an amazing opportunity to do something that in no other way would I have had the chance to do or

probably said yes to. Looking back now, I'm sort of amazed I did it. I know what it took and I use that in other aspects of my life.

...BEING VERY CLOSE TO CARON KEATING. She's irreplaceable. We would talk for hours; that is my main memory of being with her. We often missed appointments—we'd go, *Were we supposed to be somewhere else?* I was at a charity event at the Caron Keating Foundation which Gloria Hunniford, her mother, started which I think was an amazing thing to do because you could think, *This is private, I don't want to have anything else in the future with people who didn't know her.* But it has been very successful and raises money for causes such as cars that

I REMEMBER...

drive parents to the hospital and that kind of thing.

...IN COME DINE WITH ME I WAS SO LUCKY BECAUSE WE ALL GOT ON. You don't know who you're going to be paired with but Susie Amy, Tony Christie and Goldie were all such nice, interesting people. You assemble in each other's houses at about five and you finish when you finish. I think our latest one finished at one in the morning and I have heard anecdotally of them going on all night.

Cooking on television is always surprisingly hard work. It's just not how I cook. There's not normally somebody standing there with a camera pointing at you and watching you put your finger in the sauce kind of thing.

...WRITING A NOVEL AND PUTTING IT OUT UNDER A PSEUDONYM because my agent suggested it. Without being daft about it—I'm not saying it's because I'm famous or anything—if you remind people who I am they will say, "Oh yes, Janet Ellis."

So [the publishers] said, "Let's just remove [the name]. Let's let the book go out on its own and of course you can have a second crack of the whip if it doesn't work out".

But it did, and I was really proud of that because nobody can accuse me of using my career to get the book published.



With her daughter, the singer Sophie Ellis-Bextor

...MY MBE WAS A COMPLETE SURPRISE, VERGING ON SHOCK.

When I got the letter, it's so official, it looked like a fake. It was just delicious and the happiest day. The lovely thing is that I have three adult children who do lots of different things and it's hard to get them all in the same place. But they were all around on that day and when we got to the restaurant my son-in-law presented me with a bottle of champagne.

Also, for the charities that I support—without being too twee about it—it was great to be able to shine a light on the work that they do because I'm really proud of them all.



young to understand so they simply didn't know, I think. I kept it from them in the right way.

I didn't want my experience of their childhood to be marred by the non-appearance of their other sibling. I was lucky that I had three children so I don't look back now and think back and think "if only"...

...MY MOTHER, WHO DIDN'T LIVE TO OLD AGE, WAS VERY KEEN ON KEEPING THE SPIRIT OF BEING CHALLENGED.

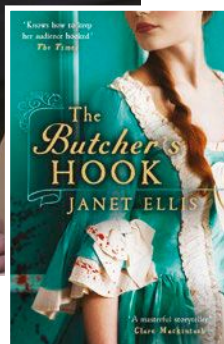
You have to be active mentally and physically, as much as you can. Mum always said that this wasn't a rehearsal for something else. She'd say to challenge yourself, particularly getting older, so I'm really keen to go camping in the New Forest. There's no time like the present to do things for the first time.

Edited by Joy Persaud

Janet Ellis is backing *Camping in the Forest*, with campsites in the UK's most beautiful, ancient forests campingintheforest.co.uk

...MY TOUGHEST TIME WAS PROBABLY HAVING A SERIES OF MISCARRIAGES.

I wanted a fourth child and I never had fourth child. But I didn't want my daughters—and my son as well—to think the process of having a baby could be fraught with difficulties and sadness and they were much too



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When roosters fully open their beaks, their external auditory canals become completely closed off—effectively acting as built-in earplugs. This prevents them from damaging their hearing when they crow. Genius!

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How did this dairy product—
long considered Mother Nature's
perfect food—become so
controversial?



Is Milk Still Good for You?

BY LISA FIELDS

MILK STILL GOOD FOR YOU



WHEN PAUL ROBERT, 62, of Almere, a city near Amsterdam, was in elementary school, he wore a special badge on his coat to show that he was a member of the Milk Brigade. This meant that he drank three glasses of milk each day.

This was just one advertising campaign created by the Dairy Bureau, an organisation of dairy farmers in the Netherlands, that Robert remembers from childhood. In 1957, schools promoted the Milk Brigade, and the government funded “school milk.”

In 1965, the Dairy Bureau introduced milk-guzzling cartoon character Joris Driepinter (George Three-Pint). “Drinking milk made him a superhero who could lift elephants,” Robert says. “Anyone in the Netherlands who is over 40 grew up convinced that milk is healthy and necessary.”

A badge and the possibility of superhuman strength didn’t convince Robert to become a lifelong milk-drinker. “I stopped drinking milk ages ago, just because I don’t

like it anymore,” he says. “No idea why. It was not a conscious process.”

Decades ago, cow’s milk was touted as one of the healthiest beverages available, superior to coffee, juice, and fizzy drinks. But over time, milk has fallen from grace.

In the 1950s, Swedes drank, on average, nearly two and a half glasses of milk a day. “We’re now down to less than one glass,” says Dr. Karl Michaëlsson, a professor of surgical sciences at Uppsala University in Sweden.

Sales have dropped across Europe—by 20 per cent over the past decade in Sweden, and by about 30 per cent over the past



“MILK IS STILL CONSUMED A LOT, BUT THE FORM AND THE PRODUCTS MADE OUT OF IT HAVE CHANGED,” SAYS PROFESSOR MÄKELÄ.

15 years in the United Kingdom. Finland has the world’s second highest milk consumption (behind Ireland), at 122 litres per capita per year, but that’s down 19 per cent, compared to 20 years ago.

While the consumption of liquid milk products has fallen,



the consumption of cheese has increased rapidly, says Johanna Mäkelä, professor of food culture at the University of Helsinki. "It could be said that milk is still consumed a lot, but the form and the products made out of it have changed."

As people age, they shun milk for many reasons: Some people can't digest it comfortably anymore. Others fear that it may contribute to heart disease. Still others seek vegan alternatives.

Whatever the reason, millions of Europeans now believe that milk is bad for them, when they thought it was good for them not long ago. We asked experts to weigh in.

COW'S MILK 101

Milk has been a life-sustaining dietary staple in Europe for thousands of years. That's especially true of the Scandinavian countries, which are cold countries. Says Dr. Christina Ellervik, associate professor of laboratory medicine at the University of Copenhagen, "What could we live on during the winter in previous ages? Basically, only dried meat, milk, and dried fish."

Milk is rich in calcium, and it also contains vitamins and minerals that aren't found in other beverages. It has an ideal ratio of protein, fat, and carbohydrates, making it a well-rounded food source.

Research has shown that milk-drinking reduces the risk of stroke,

MILK STILL GOOD FOR YOU

type 2 diabetes, and several cancers. It may reduce risk for heart disease. It's bone-strengthening and helps build muscle in adults, particularly those over age 75.

"There is a tendency for older adults to lose muscle mass quite quickly," says Ian Givens, director of the Institute of Food, Nutrition and Health at the University of Reading.

"Milk proteins have been shown to be the best protein they can consume to reduce muscle loss," he says. In an older adult, muscles help protect the bones in a fall.



GIVENS SAYS THAT
ALTHOUGH MILK
AND DAIRY PRODUCTS
ARE A SOURCE OF
SATURATED FAT, THEY
ALSO CONTRIBUTE
A LOT OF NUTRIENTS

LACTOSE INTOLERANCE

Since childhood, Mika Hämäläinen, 57, of Helsinki, drank milk with almost every meal. By age 35 or 40, he had frequent stomachaches and suspected lactose intolerance.

"I didn't see a doctor; I just stopped drinking milk and quickly noticed my stomach pains were gone," he says. "I repeated this test several times, always with the same result."

Hämäläinen first switched to drinking lactose-free milk, then plant-based milk when he stopped eating red meat. "I like the taste, and I feel healthier and happier," Hämäläinen says.

Many Europeans experience lactose intolerance, particularly in the south, where it affects up to 65 per cent of adults, compared to 18 per cent of adults in Finland. Lactose intolerance happens when someone's intestines lack a certain enzyme, called lactase, needed to digest lactose, the naturally occurring sugar in milk and other dairy products.

"There is a genetic variance, where it makes you either tolerate milk in adulthood or not," Dr. Ellervik says. "People coming from southern Europe tend to tolerate less in adulthood compared to people from Scandinavia, who tolerate milk or dairy products very well in adulthood."

Although lactose-free products are available, many people who experience gas, bloating, and diarrhea avoid milk.

"I suspect that quite a few people who think they're lactose intolerant haven't actually been assessed," Givens says.

SATURATED FAT

In recent years, saturated fat—found in animal products, including milk—has become increasingly maligned



because of its link to heart disease. “The ‘obvious’ conclusion is that we should consume less milk,” Givens says. “What people forget is that although milk and dairy products are a source of saturated fat, they also contribute a lot of nutrients.”

No studies have found a clear association—either risk or benefit—of milk for coronary heart disease, says Dr. Ellervik. “It seems that milk consumption, in terms of amount of milk that you drink, is associated with a slightly higher body mass index. But apparently, it doesn’t turn into a higher risk for either coronary heart disease or diabetes.”

Dr. Ellervik’s own research looked at nearly 100,000 adults of Danish descent. She and her colleagues have found that greater milk consumption is negatively associated with both diabetes and heart disease.

More research may be needed to convince adults that milk is heart-healthy, but the groundwork exists.

Says Givens, “There is now really good evidence that the proteins in milk have a lowering effect on blood pressure.” His own study examined 38 people over a three-month period and found that consuming milk protein in high concentration (think protein shakes that athletes ingest) lowered cholesterol levels, which lowered blood pressure levels. “I think the big picture about milk and dairy products has been missed because of the focus on saturated fats.”

BONE HEALTH

Valérie Lasserre, 52, of Viroflay, France, drank milk into adulthood because "it was presented as good medicine for our bones to grow up and to keep a good skeleton lifelong," she says.

Last year, after reading some negative press, Lasserre eliminated dairy from her diet. She lost six pounds, and an achy joint stopped hurting. She's eating cheese again but no longer drinks milk.

"I have replaced it with almond or coconut milk when I feel like having a hot chocolate," Lasserre says.

Many adults who question milk consumption worry about their bones. Many studies have shown that milk consumption is associated with a bone-protective effect, including a recent analysis of Nurses Health Study data, which followed more than 70,000 nurses for 30-plus years. "They showed that there was a benefit," Dr. Ellervik says. "The more milk you drink, the less likely you are to get a hip fracture."

Yet other researchers found the opposite. A Swedish study looked at food frequency questionnaires filled out by more than 100,000 people over a period of years. It found that the hip-fracture rate was 60 per cent higher among those who drank three or more glasses of milk daily, compared to those who drank less than one glass. "It's not proven yet,



SHOPPING ON THE NONDAIRY AISLE?

A RECENTLY PUBLISHED STUDY

by dairy researcher Sai Kranthi Kumar Vanga compared almond, soy, rice, and coconut milk to cow's milk. He found that soy milk was most nutritious, but not as nutritious as cow's milk. If you are thinking about trying non-dairy milk, here's a primer on unsweetened products.

SOY MILK

Equal to cow's milk in protein, with a slightly beany flavor

OAT MILK

Thick and creamy, low in fat and high in fiber, with a hint of oats

ALMOND MILK

Low in calories, few nutrients, and slightly sweet and nutty

HEMP MILK

Low in calories, with slightly more nutrients than almond milk, and a nutty or earthy flavor

RICE MILK

Very high in carbohydrates, very low in protein, and very sweet

COCONUT MILK

High in saturated fat, no protein, and sweet with a slight coconut flavor

but this is still our hypothesis, that galactose, a component of lactose, induces inflammation and oxidative stress," says Dr. Michaëlsson, one of the authors.

The Swedish study is controversial, says Lauri Wright, a spokeswoman for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in the United States. "It is the opposite of random control trials that show milk [calcium] protects against fractures."

NON-DAIRY MILKS

As a teenager, Michael Kallinger, 50, of Esslingen, Germany, had such bad acne, he saw a dermatologist. The doctor suspected milk allergy and asked Kallinger to avoid all dairy for five days, then eat as much as possible on the sixth day.

"The results couldn't have been any clearer," Kallinger says. "My skin got much better without milk and dramatically worse when I drank it."

Kallinger began drinking soy milk, the plant-based milk that was sold only at health-food stores in the 1980s. Today, most supermarkets sell almond, oat, soy, coconut, hemp, and rice milk. Although many consumers enjoy the taste, plant-based milks don't provide sufficient nutrition.

"A direct replacement of dairy milk with plant-based milks isn't something we suggest, as their nutrient profile can vary widely," says dairy researcher Sai Kranthi Kumar Vanga at Montréal's McGill University.



Most plant-based milk doesn't provide the mix of protein, fat, and carbohydrates that cow's milk does, or the same vitamins and minerals.

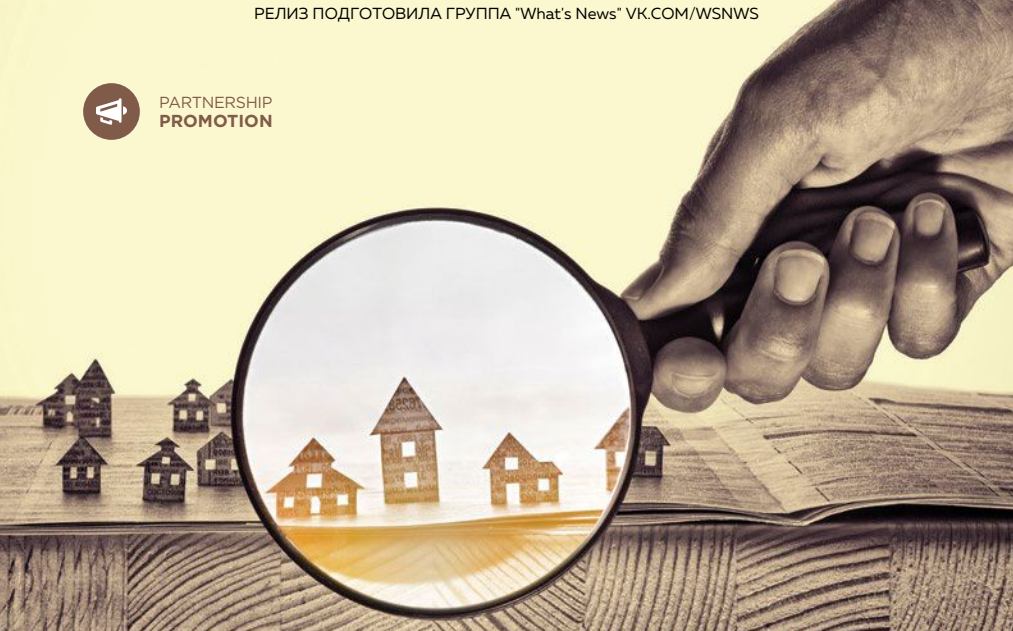
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS

Unless you're lactose intolerant or allergic, don't swear off milk based on something that you've read. "We shouldn't change our behaviour based on a single study," Dr. Michaëlsson says. "We need more studies."

Because the nutritional advantages of milk outweigh health concerns, experts recommend keeping milk in your diet. "If you like milk, I think people should drink milk," Dr. Ellervik says. "There are calories in milk, like there are in juice, or sweetened beverages in general. But of course, milk is healthier than sweetened beverages, because of calcium, and D vitamin, and a lot of good stuff."



PARTNERSHIP
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More and more of the UK's over 55 homeowners turn to their property value as a means of boosting their later-life finances, and equity release is allowing them to do so securely. Find out just how equity release has changed for the better.

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release with a lifetime mortgage is no different, so consider these important factors.

1. Choose a lifetime mortgage

Unlike other equity release options – such as Home Reversion plans – lifetime mortgages ensure that you retain full ownership rights to your property for life. You simply borrow against the property.

2) Ensure you use an Equity Release Council approved lender

This means that you, your heirs, and your property are protected by a number of important safeguards. These include the 'No Negative Equity Guarantee'. This means you will never owe more than the value of your home, nor pass on any lifetime mortgage debt to your heirs.

3) Get a personalised illustration

Equity release may reduce the value of your estate and could affect your entitlement to means-tested benefits. Ask your adviser for a personalised illustration of the features and risks to you. Thanks to interest rates that are typically fixed for term, they will be able to accurately project the build-up of interest over time for example.

4) Think about how you will use the money

The tax-free money you release is yours to spend as you wish, meaning that you could transform your house into your dream home, enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime

holiday, or provide an early inheritance to your family. It is important to consider exactly why you need the money, and be aware that the money must first be used to clear any debt secured against the property, such as an existing repayment mortgage.

5) Consider voluntary repayment options

There are lifetime mortgage options that allow you to make voluntary repayments – often up to 10% of the initial mortgage amount per year without penalty – that can help mitigate the build-up of interest. There is no requirement to make a repayment, but the options are there if you need. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Releasing equity is a big decision. It is not something you buy online or over the phone instantly, and it is something you enter into after a qualified advice process. Make sure that you get as much information as possible, talk to your personal adviser with no-obligation, and get the personalised figures, and then make up your mind.

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Your Eyesight— Friends And Foes

What are the enemies of healthy eyes and what are the pals that can protect them from damage?

Bright colours | Friend

Brightly coloured fruit and veg, that is. Corn, orange peppers, oranges and carrots all contain lutein, widely considered to be the “eye vitamin.” It’s so named because it may help guard against problems such as cataracts and age-related macular degeneration (AMD), the most common cause of visual impairment.

Eating your greens | Friend

Can you detect a theme here? The truth is that you should not only be eating brightly coloured produce or finishing up your green leafy veg, such as kale and spinach, but you should be embracing an all-round healthy diet. It should include oily fish, such as salmon, tuna and mackerel, and eggs, which may help protect against cataracts.



Susannah Hickling is twice winner of the Guild of Health Writers Best Consumer Magazine Health Feature

One too many | Foe

Yes, along with all the other problems alcohol causes, it’s bad for your eyes too. The jury’s still out as to whether booze can be the cause of cataracts, glaucoma and AMD, but excessive alcohol consumption has been linked to progressive optic neuropathy. This leads to visual impairment and loss of colour vision. Aim to stick within the government’s recommended limit of 14 units per week for men and women.

Smoking | Foe

It seems the old cancer sticks don’t just give you cancer. They’re also the biggest risk factor for AMD and could be the cause of cataracts too. If giving up is hard, consider getting support from your local NHS stop smoking service (nhs.uk/Service-Search/Stop-smoking-services/LocationSearch/1846).

Keeping fit | Friend

Older people, in particular, are more at risk of high blood pressure, hardening or narrowing of the

arteries, and Type 2 diabetes, all of which can lead to loss of vision. Hardening of the arteries can block the blood supply to the eye and high blood pressure can cause leakage and bleeding in the blood vessels of the eye. People with diabetes may have retinopathy. The good news is that regular exercise can help to prevent these threats to your eyesight.

Autumn sunshine | Foe

Sound lovely, don't they, those slanting golden rays? Sadly, they're not good for your eyes. In fact, you might be surprised to learn that when the sun is lower in the sky, as it is at the autumn equinox, it poses a greater hazard to your vision than in summer and may put you at a greater risk of AMD and cataracts. In summer, when the sun is high in the sky, your brow acts as a sunshade and protects your peepers from too much UV light. A good rule of thumb is to wear sunglasses (make sure they carry the CE mark) and a hat when your shadow is shorter than you.

Going to the optician | Friend

An eye test at least every two years will not only show whether you need glasses or a new prescription, but will also check your eye health. Your optometrist can even spot health

conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, tumours and rheumatoid arthritis.



Hairy Facts

Female hair loss can have many causes, and doesn't have to be a life sentence...

While being thin is often seen as the ideal, one place no woman wants to be thin is on top. Yet it happens surprisingly often. The most common type of hair loss in women—female pattern baldness—affects 70 per cent over 70, according to NHS figures. But it can affect women of all ages.

Apart from female pattern baldness (*androgenetic alopecia*), when the hair on the crown of your head thins, the other common type is *telogen effluvium*. With this, you lose hair all over the head.

It's normal to shed 100 or more hairs a day, so it may take a while to notice that you're losing your crowning glory. But if there's a gradual thinning on the crown, a widening parting or you can wrap a hair tie around a pony tail more times than before, then it's time to seek help from your GP.

What you can do about losing your locks as a woman depends on the cause. The good news is that your hair often grows back. Common reversible



triggers of hair loss include iron deficiency, thyroid problems, surgery, chemotherapy, radical diets or nutritional deficiencies. But the stress of bereavement, break-up or bankruptcy can also cause your hair to fall out.

You'll need to treat the underlying cause, as well as a generous dose of patience—regrowth may not start for six months.

Female pattern hair loss is often hereditary and not curable. But using minoxidil lotion can slow it down, and sometimes even partially restore hair. Alarmingly, it can cause more hair to fall out initially and you won't see any benefit for around six months. You'll also need to carry on using minoxidil to prevent further hair loss.

Stopping smoking and eating a healthy diet can help with telogen effluvium, the usually reversible form of female baldness. Our top tip for protecting your mane? Don't overuse hair dryers and straighteners, as they can damage it.



Ask The Expert

Adam Cox

Psychologist and clinical hypnotherapist **Adam Cox** specialises in curing phobias (phobiaguru.com). He's a hypnotherapist for the Spider Courage Experience, which helps people overcome their fear.

How did you become a spider phobia expert? As a teenager I was riddled with fears. After curing myself, I decided to help other people overcome phobias. I have a degree in psychology and two postgraduate qualifications in clinical hypnotherapy.

What causes people to be afraid of spiders? Normally, it's either a sensitising event, such as seeing a spider and feeling distressed as a child, or a learned fear from parents.

How easy is it to cure arachnophobia? We've cured more than 200 arachnophobics across more than 15 workshops and we have a 100 per cent success rate. Techniques include hypnotherapy, a combination of immersive therapy and desensitisation where we gradually build people's courage so that they can hold a tarantula, and even art therapy.

What practical tips can you offer for overcoming a fear of spiders? Slow down your breathing. Many people have an elevated heart rate when their sympathetic nervous system is activated. By slowing your breathing you can take back control. Understand fear doesn't need to be permanent. Phobias are one of the fastest psychological issues to deal with. It's possible to remove fear in a few minutes.

Can you give any fast facts about spiders that might reassure people?

Spiders aren't even in the top ten most dangerous animals. Mosquitoes and humans top the list. Spiders have very poor eyesight. They can't see humans, just feel their vibrations. They're very delicate. It's easy to accidentally kill them, so they are very vulnerable.

To find out more about the Spider Courage Experience, go to creaturecourage.com

Human Kind?

An encounter with a Second World War veteran has Max Pemberton reflecting on his own humanity

Doctors are only human. And just as the course of human history is often a dark and ugly one, so medicine has a chequered past. I remember when I was 15 years old and studying for my history exams being horrified to read that, of all people in society, it was the doctors in Nazi Germany that first implemented mass murder. It was naive of me to think doctors should be different from anyone else. The eugenic and anti-Semitic ideas which culminated in the Holocaust received strong ideological and practical backing from doctors.

Even before the outbreak of war in September 1939, doctors ordered the forced sterilisation of 400,000 mentally handicapped and ill people, epileptics and alcoholics. Between January 1940 and September 1942,

over 70,000 patients were murdered. These were chosen from a list of patients whose lives were deemed "not worth living" drawn up by doctors, including nine professors of psychiatry. I don't understand how these doctors, who had joined a profession whose main aim is to relieve suffering could be the cause of it on such a horrific scale. Humans, while capable of bravery, compassion and kindness, stand apart from all other animals in the level of suffering they are capable of inflicting on each other. And doctors are no exception.

But then we have people like Mr Sinclair. I met Mr Sinclair when I was working in geriatrics one summer. He'd got an infected leg ulcer and sat, propped up in bed, smiling, as I approached and introduced myself. The old man in front of me didn't look very special but during the Second World War, that's exactly what he was. After talking to him about his leg, I sat on the edge of his bed, and he told me about his life.

"I'm not originally from this country," he began and explained that



Max is a hospital doctor, author and columnist. He currently works full time in mental health for the NHS. His latest book is a self-help guide to using CBT to stop smoking



he'd fled Poland when it was occupied by the Nazis. "But then the danger really started," he added. He was recruited into the Special Operations Executive. There he went behind enemy lines to try and bring the Nazis down. "I don't talk about it much; there are things I don't want to remember. But it's important your generation know."

Mr Sinclair had gone throughout occupied Europe, along with countless other members of the SOE, sabotaging Nazi plans. The risks were very real: the life expectancy of an SOE wireless operator in occupied France was just six weeks. "But more than the fear for your own life, the thing that's still hard is knowing that people died because of your actions,"

he says. "It doesn't matter that they were the enemy, they were still humans." All his family were killed in concentration camps. He goes on to tell me of the things he did, the operations he was involved in and the atrocious things he saw. His friend blown up by a grenade. A mother and child shot at point blank range. It's obviously painful for him to relive this, and I'm honoured he deems me worthy to hear it.

"Thank you for listening," he says as I get up to go, when it should be me thanking him. As I went to shake his hand, I noticed that he'd been gently crying. As a doctor I'm supposed to be removed from my patients, but as I walked away, I was close to tears too. After all, I'm only human.

The Doctor Is In

Dr Max Pemberton

Q: I have recently been diagnosed with ME after being seriously ill for many months. I'm wondering how long I will have to put up with this disabling physical and mental fatigue. It keeps me feeling wiped out and mildly confused for most of the time. I was always an active and capable person before and wish to be again.

- Liz, Chichester

A: I'm so sorry to hear about this. I have had many patients with ME over the years and I know how debilitating it can be. Years ago ME (sometimes called Chronic Fatigue Syndrome or CFS) was dismissed as "yuppy flu". This did those with this condition an enormous disservice. Thankfully now people are beginning to understand that it is a complex, disabling condition.

The main symptoms, as you mention, are severe and debilitating fatigue as well as painful muscles and joints, disturbed sleep and bowel problems. People will

sometimes have sensitivity to light or noise, poor concentration and poor memory, sometimes referred to as "brain fog". It seems to often be triggered by a viral infection.

We still don't really know what causes ME and there's no definitive treatment. Some people report symptoms improving with various psychological treatments, while for others this doesn't seem effective. Some people do improve after months with the condition, while for others it can be a much longer illness, with fluctuating symptoms.

Unfortunately it's impossible to say how long it will last for you. Do make contact with the ME Association who

will be able to give you more information and support. It's worth investigating to see if there's an NHS ME service in your area.

I wish you all the best with your recovery.

Got a health question for our resident doctor? Email it confidentially to askdrmax@readersdigest.co.uk



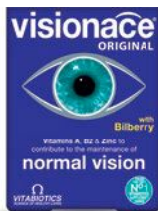
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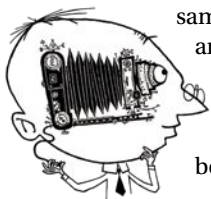



VITABIOTICS
SCIENCE OF HEALTHY LIVING

Memories And Places

Familiar places have been used to structure people's learning since ancient times, and they're still the blueprint for improving recall, says our memory expert, **Jonathan Hancock**

For the Ancient Greek poet Simonides, the top three secrets to a powerful memory were simple: "location, location, location." He's credited with being the first person to point out the power of place to help us remember. It works because it comes naturally. We learn spatial layouts with ease, and we instinctively link memories to places. First, pick a real building you know well—your home, for example—and choose a clear route around it, highlighting key areas along the way. Take a quick practice "walk" along this route in your head. The ten locations are now ready to be filled with information.



So, to remember everything on this shopping-list...EGGS, BREAD, BANANAS, MILK, SALT, CHOCOLATE, TOMATOES, BUTTER, GRAPES, COFFEE...you could imagine finding eggs smashed all over your front doorstep. Walking into the hallway, you have to squeeze past the world's largest loaf of bread to get to the kitchen, where every cupboard is crammed with bright yellow bananas. Exaggerate all the imagery. Then, go back into your imagination, take the same walk around the building, and find the eggs on the doorstep, the bread in the hallway, the kitchen full of bananas. Everything should be exactly where you left it.

THE CHALLENGE: TO MEMORISE THE UK'S TOP PARTICIPATION SPORTS, IN RANKED ORDER FROM ONE TO TEN

SWIMMING, ATHLETICS, CYCLING, SOCCER, GOLF, GYM, BADMINTON, TENNIS, HORSE-RIDING, BOWLS

The technique: choose a different building, decide on ten spaces inside it along a sensible route, then visualise these sports—as if they're actually taking place in your ten locations, with comical, exciting, memorable results.

The test: after a few minutes, check that all ten sports are still there, in exactly the right order. And then, think about what else you could learn like this—because memory methods from the past can be incredibly useful today, and the perfect way to keep your brain in good shape for the future.

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Your oddest human compulsions, evaluated

BY LORI KOLMAN

Normal or NUTS

YOU LIVE A PRETTY NORMAL LIFE. You've got friends, you've got hobbies, and you're happy to spend 20 minutes hunting for the toothpaste at the pharmacy rather than—*God, no! No! Anything but that!*—actually asking an assistant for help. Trust us, that behaviour is normal, because all of us are a little, well, quirky. And in most cases, our idiosyncrasies are curable, or at least curbable. We asked an array of psychiatrists, psychologists, and other health professionals to weigh in on a variety of odd behaviours burdening our readers and staff. You might recognise one of them in yourself and wonder, *Am I normal or nuts?* The answer is always yes and yes.

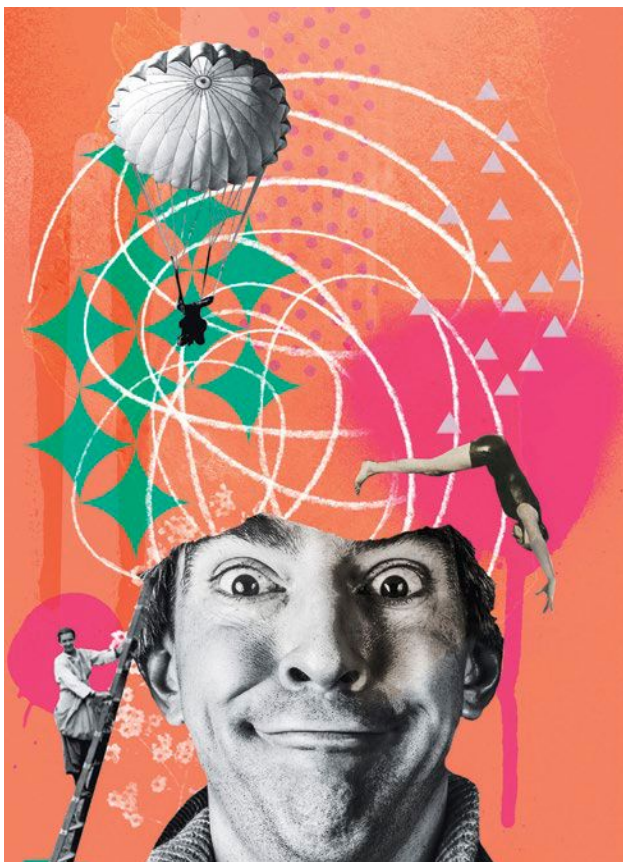


Why am I awkward around kids? I have nothing to say to people under 12, and frankly, I don't find them particularly cute. What's wrong with me?

"I hear this all the time," says Charlynn Ruan, a Los Angeles clinical psychologist who works, ironically enough, mostly with mothers. "A lot of them say, 'The only children I like are my own.'" At the root of this more-common-than-you'd-expect dread is the ever-potent fear of embarrassment.

One common concern is that "out of the mouths of babes" will come a truth no one wants to hear: "That man smells funny, Mummy." "Wow, lady, you must eat a *lot* of food." "What are all those lines on your face?"

Then there's the cringe factor of doting parents—and worse, grandparents!—hovering nearby, convinced that everything their child says should be etched in stone. No wonder you're uncomfortable talking to the no-neck monsters.



But there's a solution, says Dr. Howard Forman, a psychiatrist at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City: Grab a book and read to the kid. That puts you in the driver's seat and gives you something to say.

N or N Rating (from 1 to 10, with 10 being certifiably bonkers): 2
You're not all that nutty.

I cannot make a decision to save my life. Choosing between reading and taking a walk can take all afternoon. Heck, it took me forever to choose to write this note.

An inability to make even minor decisions—not just taking your time to weigh your options—is an actual disorder, says Dr. David M. Reiss, a psychiatrist in Rancho Santa Fe, California. It can result in functional paralysis: If you literally can't decide what to do next, you don't do anything at all.

The term for this is *abulomania*, says psychotherapist and author Tina B. Tessina. "Abulomania sufferers are normal in practically every other way. They simply run into very serious problems whenever they're faced with certain choices, to the extent that they struggle to regain normal function."

It often comes from being raised by such harsh, controlling parents that the sufferer never got any practice with making decisions—these were always forced on him or her, says Ruan. But it can also come from plain old anxiety. In that case, the person obsesses over the impact of a decision and becomes so worried about it that he or she just decides not to decide.

In either case, the sufferer could greatly benefit from therapy.

"Long-term therapy is best," says Ruan, "because the person needs to experience somebody who is supportive of him or her making decisions." If the root cause is anxiety, an antidepressant may be called for.

N or N Rating: 7

This behavior is driving you nuts, but therapy can help.

I'd sooner spend 20 minutes searching the store shelves for the thing I need than **ask the assistant for some assistance.**

Two phobias are probably at work here: the fear of appearing stupid and the fear of imposing on someone, says author Dr. Friedemann Schaub. In both cases, the person doesn't want to be a burden to the employee, even though that's what the employee is paid to do: serve you.

But lurking beneath the fear of asking for help is the secondary fear of being a jerk for not reciprocating. "There's the embarrassment of leaving the store without buying something if you used their time," Dr. Schaub says. If you don't ask for assistance, you can leave empty-handed without guilt.

The truth is that most assistants are bored out of their aprons and would *love* the distraction—and

NORMAL OR NUTS

momentary fulfillment—of helping you. “People want to be needed,” says Alan Hilfer, a clinical psychologist in New York City. “Sometimes I watch a tourist asking someone for directions, and I can’t *wait* to get in there and say, ‘I can help you!’” So if you don’t see what you’re looking for, ask. You just may make someone a little happier—and even find what you need.

N or N Rating: 3

A little nutty but highly curable.

I chew on my fingernails. OK, lots of people do that. But **I’ve taken to chewing on my cuticles** and even fingers to the point of drawing blood. That can’t be normal, right?

Right. It’s not normal. All of us have picked at a scab or bitten a nail or two, but when you start drawing blood, that’s extreme. Ruan has seen cases in which people poke and pick at themselves until they actually have holes in their skin. These patients look as if they’re on drugs, she says. “But it’s just anxiety-driven.”



What is happening, according to Ruan, is that the fight-or-flight part of the brain is sort of broken. It is stuck in “*I must do something!*” mode. You are agitated, but you aren’t actually in a situation that calls for running or fighting. You may be alone in your living room, but all the anxious energy has to do something, so the answer is to chew—madly.

Ruan suggests seeing a psychiatrist for an antidepressant, “which will dial back the anxiety.” At the same time, that doctor can

work with you on some behaviour-modification techniques.

But remember: Anxiety is self-perpetuating. It doesn't stop until you begin to face whatever is causing it. So the sooner you get help, the sooner whatever's eating you (that is, you) will get better.

N or N Rating: 8

This is serious. You should seek help before things get worse.

My friends are all huggers, and I hate it! When they see me, they throw their arms around me and squeeze away. I'm not a germophobe, and I love my friends. I'd just prefer a handshake. Is that so wrong?

"It could have been me asking that question," says Dr. Forman of Albert Einstein College. "I think hugs are super complex. How long is the hug supposed to last? How tight do you squeeze? Where do your hands go? Do you involve a second arm? Hugging leads to a lot more questions than it answers."

Our country seems to have grown hugger over the years, and Dr. Forman blames TV, especially talk shows, on which guests are often greeted with hugs. Or perhaps it's "lad" culture writ large. You see your buddy and give him a big, beery hug like the ones in the *Hangover* movies.

Whatever the reason, it's perfectly fine to head off a hug by sticking out your hand for a handshake. Want to make it warmer? Use your other arm to grasp the person's forearm. Lots of contact and affirmation. Zero actual hugging.

And if even that feels weird, hop on a plane. In about half the world, it's hugging that is rude, not *not* hugging.

N or N Rating: 1

You're not a nut; you're just stuck in an increasingly hug-happy culture.

I have this compulsion to **say hello to everyone that I pass** in the office or on the street. This strikes me (and everyone else) as a little much, but I can't seem to stop. How weird is this?

Maybe you come from a friendly place. Psychologist Ruan lived for a while in Atlanta, US, where people were very friendly and chatty, even from the next stall in the public toilet. "One woman started talking to me," says Ruan, "and I was like, 'We're supposed to pretend we can't see each other's feet! You're ruining the social norms here!' But that's the way they are: super friendly."

If your goal is to tone down your greeting, try acknowledging others with a friendly smile without slowing down. On the other hand, "not

NORMAL OR NUTS

everything has to be analysed," says Dr. Aaron Pinkhasov, chairman of behavioural health at New York University Winthrop Hospital in Mineola. The problem is really not how you greet passersby; it's whether you're becoming so self-conscious about it that you are starting to avoid encounters entirely, by taking circuitous routes or staying at your desk, for example.

If that's happening, remember that being friendly is no crime. And in fact, says Dr. Forman, "if this is the one thing wrong with you, you're doing pretty well."

N or N Rating: 1

All you need is a good greeting strategy.

I am addicted to chalk. Not writing with it—eating it. Why can't I just crave burgers and fries?

The desire to eat nonfood items, including sand, coffee grounds, matches, and mothballs, is called *pica*, which webmd.com defines as "the persistent eating of substances ... that have no nutritional value." It's most common in children and pregnant women. The cause is not clear, but "some of it is the body looking for nutrients," perhaps triggered by a metabolic disorder, says psychiatrist Dr. Reiss.

But, he adds, if the items eaten are really bizarre (more bizarre

than mothballs?), the cause may be psychological. "I've seen people who have Munchausen syndrome, which is intentionally making yourself ill to get medical care, swallowing everything from knives to blood," says Dr. Reiss. "There was also a patient who ate a fork. We don't know how he swallowed it, but he did."

The key is to visit your doctor pronto to find out whether you are craving a nutrient and if so, why. If that's not the case, call a psychiatrist.

N or N Rating: 9

It's a real issue if it's more than a nutritional imbalance.

This is super dark, but I often imagine ways **I could poison my family and friends** when I'm cooking dinner for them. I love them, so why do I think this way?

Sometimes things lurking in the darkest part of our subconscious—torture, death, doing really nasty things to our mother-in-law—just bubble up, says Hilfer. "It's a fleeting thought, a dark part that a lot of us keep repressed, and every so often, it kind of pokes through, and we think, Gee, that's weird."

Why do we fantasise about running someone over in the street? Maybe it's because we recognise how fragile life is: One bad decision on our part and it's curtains!

Or it could be emerging as a result of some latent anger. "There may be some kind of aggression that hasn't been addressed," says Dr. Schaub. Maybe the would-be poisoner is sick of cooking meals for people who never reciprocate.

"It doesn't mean she really wants to kill them; the thought is nothing more than a metaphor," he says. It's simmering, like dinner—with some extra-special seasoning.

N or N Rating: 3

You're nuts—if you actually want to murder them. If it's based on anger, address that. Otherwise, don't worry about it.

Whenever I ask someone a question—for directions, for instance—I **find my mind wandering**. Instead of listening to how to get to Hicksville, I'll focus on the ugly buttons on her shirt. Why can't I concentrate?

It could be that you are trying so hard to show you're a good listener that instead of actually listening, you are already thinking ahead. "This happens a lot on first dates," says Hilfer. "You ask a question and then don't pay attention long enough because you're already thinking about the next question you're going to ask to show you were paying attention."



The solution is to train yourself to focus more. You can do this, says Tessina, by turning on the TV or radio for short periods of time and making a serious effort to pay attention. Then turn it off and try to remember what was said. Pretty soon you will develop a less distractible brain.

N or N Rating: 3

Not too nuts, just easily ... Hey, what do you call that colour? It's not exactly red.

BEST OF
British

HOOK NORTON BREWERY

BREWERIES

We're raising the bar with seven of our favourite British breweries for a tour and a pint. Hop to it!

BY ANNA WALKER



HOOK NORTON BREWERY OXFORDSHIRE

With its iconic Victorian tower building and beautiful Cotswold Hills location, Hook Norton might just be the most picture-perfect brewery in Britain. One of just 32 family-owned breweries in the country, beer has been brewed here since 1856.

Enjoy a real taste of history as you encounter the brewery's four working shire horses—Nelson, Monty, Major and Lucas—out making their local deliveries or take in the working steam engine, driving

the brewery machinery just as it has done since 1899.

Says tour guide Malcolm Black, "Enjoy a two-hour tour of our independent, family-owned Victorian tower brewery, renowned for hand-brewed quality real ales brewed on site since 1849. All the products we use are traditional, which you will be able to smell and taste and much of our machinery dates back to 1900. In addition, you'll be able to see our microbrewery and team of majestic heavy horses."

hooky.co.uk

BEST OF BRITISH

NORTHERN MONK

LEEDS

Now in their fifth year of brewing, this Leeds local collaborates with breweries across the North to create some of the most varied and delicious flavours out there: from American style beer to classic British heritage pints.

Says events manager Vik Kastenbauer, "Our 45-minute brewery tour is hosted at The Old Flax Store, our Grade II listed mill in Holbeck—the spiritual heart of the industrial revolution. During the tour, you'll visit our tap room which is located above the brewery itself, where you'll have the opportunity to sample three beer tasters."

Enjoy your tasters in the tap room in the beautiful surrounds of the Grade II listed building. It's the only publicly accessible mill in the city, so it's your unique opportunity to get an insight into Leeds's industrial past. And if you're hungry, there's plenty of delicious grub on site too.

northernmonkbrewco.com





HILLSIDE BREWERY GLOUCESTERSHIRE

This small-scale brewery was founded in 2014 with a very simple aim: to create a brewery that would become part of the local community.

Perched just a stone's throw away from the beautiful Forest of Dean, Hillside is an eco-conscious brewer, running on solar power and recycling all they can. Spent hops and grain go to the local cattle which are in turn milked to create a delicious beer ice cream made by Hillbrooks Luxury Ice Cream.

Says brewery director Paul Williamson, "Hillside brewery produce a range of award winning beers. You can see, touch, smell and experience the brewing ingredients and how they relate to the process up close. All while sitting back and enjoying a well-earned ale overlooking some of Gloucestershire's most stunning landscapes. Come and lose yourself in an experience unlike any other, where effort and passion combine into a great experience."

hillsidebrewery.com/brewery-tours

BEST OF BRITISH

HAWKSHEAD BREWERY**LAKE DISTRICT**

With flavours including Key Lime Tau, Chocolate Northern Imperial Stout and Passionfruit Gose, you'll never be bored in the tap room of the Lake District's premier brewery. And with each tour offering taster vouchers, you'll be spoiled for choice when it comes to picking your pint.

Hawkshead's slogan is "beer from

the heart" and it's certainly made that way: with a focus on distinctive flavours, this is a hands-on brewery, with very little automation. Tour guides are warm, knowledgeable and keen to show you the very best Hawkshead flavours.

If you like to enjoy your pint with a side of live music, this is the brewery for you, with entertainment on offer almost every week.

hawksheadbrewery.co.uk



THREE TUNS BREWERY

SHROPSHIRE

Brewing since 1642, Shropshire's Three Tuns is officially Britain's oldest brewery. Operating from a Grade II listed Victorian tower (one of only four breweries to do so in the UK), the brewery attracts visitors from all over the world, affectionately referred to as the "Three Tun pilgrims."

A tour of this brewery not only offers a taste of the delicious brews, but also an insight into how our ancestors brewed. Highlights include the original winch that hoisted malt to the top of the tower to begin the brewing process.

The restaurant often books out, so be sure to call in early if you intend to grab a bite after your tour. Enjoy a cold pint while the sun's still with us, but rest assured, the brewery's roaring fires make it an unmissable pitstop for the colder months too.

threetunsbrewery.co.uk



BEST OF BRITISH

BRISTOL BEER FACTORY**BRISTOL**

This brewery—which describes itself as “fiercely independent”—is experimental and innovative with a quirky range of flavourful brews; would you expect anything less in a city as trendy as Bristol?

Here, hop-loving visitors can enjoy off-kilter events as well as the traditional brewery tour. Pay a visit to the tap room for Table Tennis

Tuesdays and regular specialist tasting sessions or enjoy special live music nights, made all the more enjoyable by sipping a refreshing pint that’s been brewed on site.

Make the most of the last of the summer sun by soaking it up on the outdoor tables, velvety pint in hand—total bliss!

bristolbeerfactory.co.uk





SULWATH BREWERY

GALLOWAY, SCOTLAND
Castle Douglas—a designated food town—is the cosy home of Sulwath Brewery, a must-visit for real ale fans.

Brewed through traditional methods using 100 per cent natural ingredients, Sulwath makes beer the traditional way. They claim that it's the softness of the local water that makes their brews so rounded and mellow.

Fans of the supernatural watch out—according to staff, brewers

working the night-shift have been known to spot the brewery's former owner wandering the unused rooms during darker nights.

If night-frights aren't your bag, fear not, this brewery welcomes dogs, so you can enjoy the more wholesome daylight sight of frolicking pups as you enjoy your pint and a pie.

sulwathbrewers.co.uk

Do you have a favourite brewery? Email us about it at readersletters@readersdigest.co.uk

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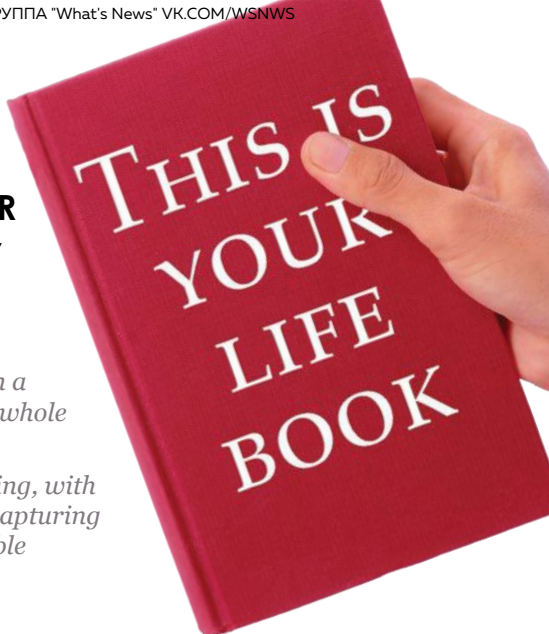
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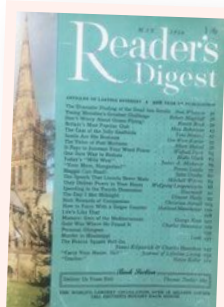
• ARCHIVE

From Our Archive

MAY 1956

MAGGIE CAN READ

By John Crosby



I can remember when my daughter Maggie, who is now six, used to crawl into my lap and say, “Daddy, read me a story.” Last year she announced, “Daddy, I’m going to read *you* a story.”

Maggie is a television child. When she first became conscious of anything beyond eating and sleeping, the TV set was right there, and it soon commanded her attention. A few years ago, we were worried not only that we’d never get the children away from the set long enough to learn to read, but that we’d forget how to read ourselves. But in 1955 there was not only more reading than before TV, but more reading that ever before in history.*

Clearly, reading has survived television as it has survived a lot of other things. When I was six, a wail went up about menaces to reading at home: motor cars and cinema. When Maggie came along, there was television. The motorcar, the radio, the cinema and television *do* take up a lot of time.

Well, we’ve got more time. When my



mother was a girl, people worked about 60 hours a week. Now it’s 44. When Maggie grows up, it’ll be 30. And there’ll be umpteen gadgets to do her housework. She’ll have to read. You can’t watch TV all day.

At present Maggie is reading about Johnny Woodchuck.

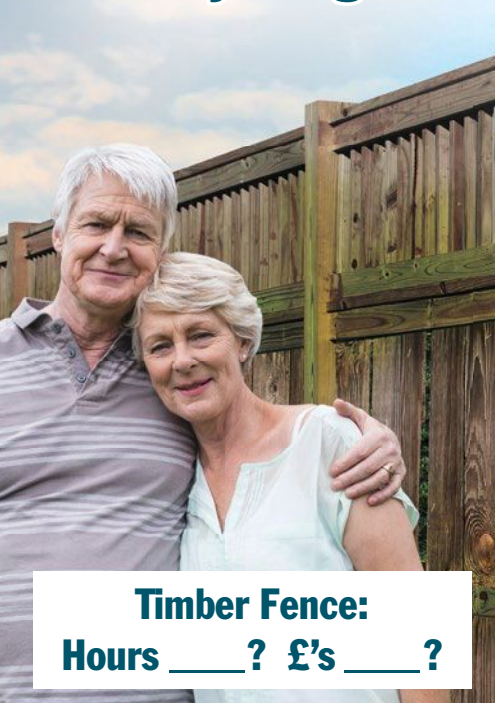
Ahead of her—and I’m a little envious—are her first brush with Black Beauty, Alice stepping through the looking glass, Huck and Jim drifting down the Mississippi, the emotional storms of Shakespeare, the spiritual agonies of Tolstoy.

For reading isn’t all joy. Like life itself, it’s compounded of many moods, from ecstasy to despair. Maggie will learn to take the rough with the smooth, gathering from the ancient wisdom of long-dead genius a little fire to enrich her spirit.

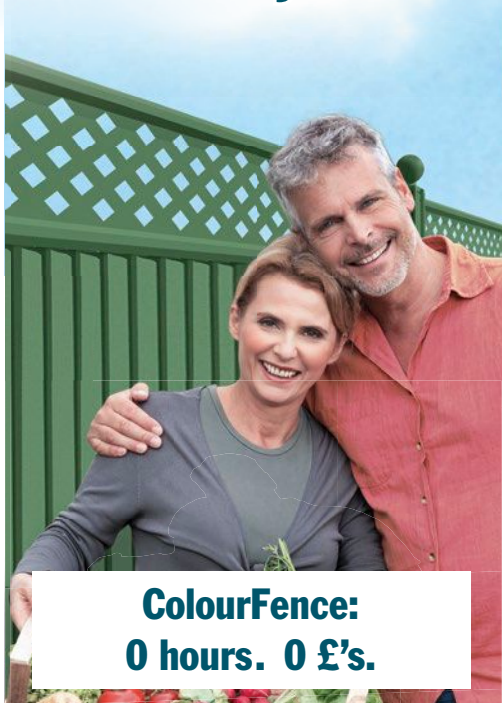
And some day, if she’s lucky, she’ll get the biggest thrill of all, when a little girl climbs into her lap and announces, “Mummy, I’m going to read *you* a story.”

*In Britain people were buying 29 million newspapers a day, 60 million magazines a week and £30millions-worth of books a year

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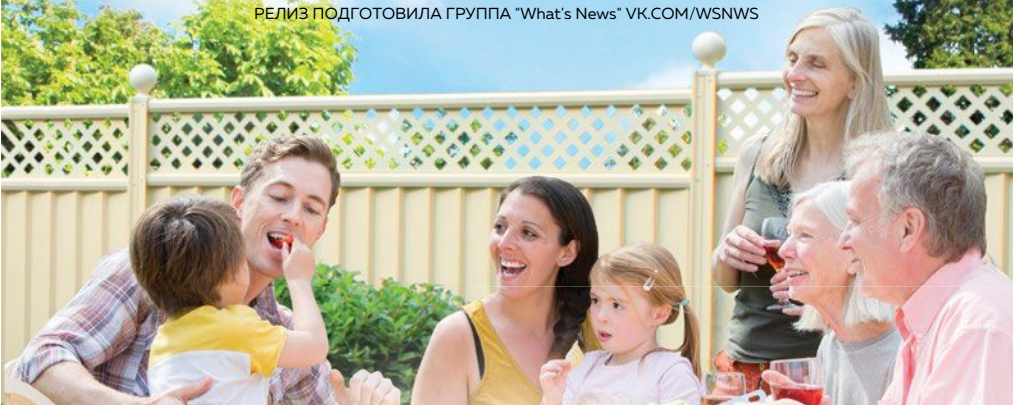
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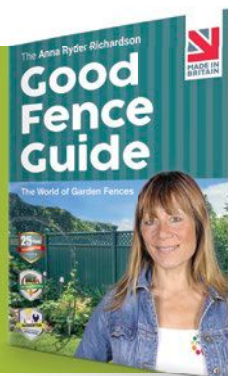
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IF I RULED THE WORLD

Pam Ayres

Pam Ayres has been a writer, broadcaster and entertainer for over 40 years and is the author of several best-selling poetry collections. One of our most popular female comedians, she's currently on a UK tour

People would be more compassionate to animals. I feel strongly that we should live alongside them; my garden belongs just as much to birds, toads, frogs, hedgehogs and grass snakes as it does to me.

I'd teach children to cook at school. As they grow up they'd appreciate the value of eating healthily and know that cooking is fun. When I was young we studied "domestic science" and I'll never forget the moment I was handed a chunk of yeast. I was amazed by this living spongy stuff that transformed my dough into the most delicious smelling and tasting bread.

We'd keep an eye on those close to us. Of course it's great to help people the other side of the globe but let's not forget our family, friends and local community. We should get to know and look out for our neighbours and be there to offer support if someone needs it. I'm lucky because I live in a

very nice village with a lovely network of people who do things to bring people together—we recently had a village festival where everyone opened their gardens. It was great fun.

If you have room for a dog in your life it would come from a rescue shelter. The benefits of dog ownership are well known but there's something extra special if that dog needed a new start in life. They're so grateful. People with dogs tend to smile at each other and are more open to conversations, plus the outdoor exercise is great for your physical and mental health.

I'd stop car-parking charges at hospitals. Recently my brother-in-law was very ill and my sister was paying large amounts to visit him. It seems immoral to add to the burden of anyone with a loved one in hospital.

Hotel bedrooms would be designed better. I travel a lot and I've lost count



of the number of times I've had to squint in the mirror on the back of a wardrobe with the hairdryer flex stretched to its maximum. Just a comfortable chair, a table, lit mirror and a socket, all within reach of each other, would be nice.

I'd give farmers financial incentives to encourage wildlife on their land.

One of the worst results of intensive farming is the deadly run off from the chemicals that are sprayed over crops. This toxic liquid finds its way into our streams and seas. When I was a child I used to love lying on my tummy by the stream near our house and the joy of lifting up stones to find little

bullheads, sticklebacks and minnows was wonderful. Now that stream has no wildlife in it at all and I mourn the poisoning of the habitat.

I'd tell people, "It's OK to be different". In fact, it's something we should encourage. There's a lot of pressure on children to conform but it's good to remind them that it's perfectly all right to be themselves.

As told to Caroline Hutton

.....
Pam will be touring the UK until February, visit pamayres.com for tickets and futher details. Her latest book, *The Last Hedgehog*, is out now.

"ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR WEST END MUSICALS EVER."

Evening Standard



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WILL WE EVER CONTROL THE WEATHER?

BY CHRIS MENON

Humans have been attempting to control the weather for thousands of years now and, with the ever-evolving scientific advancements, the prospect is beginning to look more and more tangible. But with great power, comes great responsibility...

Back in late February, Britain shivered in sub-zero Siberian winds with snow covering the country. The "Beast from the East," as it was dubbed by the media, refused to die quietly, coming back from the dead in early March to again ravage most of the UK with exceptional, heavy snowfall that disrupted travel and transport.

According to Martin Bowles, Operational Meteorologist at the Met Office, "It was a severe event by UK standards". However, it hardly matched the Winter of 1962-63, when mean temperatures stayed below freezing from Christmas to early

March, blizzards caused snowdrifts 20 foot deep, while rivers and even the sea at Whitstable in Kent froze solid in places.

Yet even these extreme weather events hardly compare to some that have been experienced elsewhere round the globe, killing hundreds of thousands of people.

Given the historic unpredictability of the weather it's hardly surprising that since time immemorial people have attempted to control or modify it using ritual practices. The exact forms have differed depending on culture but have ranged from rain dances

WILL WE EVER CONTROL THE WEATHER?

(North American Indians), human sacrifices (Aztecs and Vikings) to more simple ceremonies and prayers.

Nowadays, people in the UK are generally more inclined to put their faith in science. Certainly, scientists now have a better understanding of the complex physical interactions between the atmosphere and large areas of ocean and land that ensure weather is more predictable over the timescale of a few days.

However, as Dr Phillip Williamson from the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of East Anglia points out, a reasonable understanding of these processes doesn't mean it's possible to manipulate them to achieve reliable weather control. He explains, "For example, although deliberate cooling of the surface ocean could, in theory, slow or divert hurricanes, the effort needed to change the temperature of many millions of tons of seawater would involve costs many times greater than the uncertain benefits obtained. Changing local cloud conditions to stimulate rainfall is potentially more achievable; nevertheless, there has been low success for the many rain-making techniques that have been tried."

IN A FASCINATING BOOK ENTITLED

Fixing The Sky, James Roger Fleming, Professor of Science, Technology and Society at Colby College in the US, discusses various attempts to



Freezing weather conditions dubbed the "Beast from the East" brought snow and sub-zero temperatures to many parts of the UK

manipulate weather on a small scale. For example, during the Second World War, Britain managed to clear fog over airfields by burning petrol, using a secret system known as the Fog Investigation and Dispersal Operation (FIDO). Fleming admits, "FIDO actually worked", but it was too expensive for peacetime operation.

Similarly, on occasion cloud seeding (the introduction of chemicals such as silver iodide into clouds) appears to have successfully produced rain. For example, during the Beijing Olympics rockets were fired into clouds to prematurely trigger rain so as to avoid the opening ceremony



ONE OF THE PITFALLS
COULD BE THAT TRYING
TO MODIFY THE
WEATHER IN ONE
PLACE COULD
ACTUALLY CAUSE A
DISASTER ELSEWHERE

EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS



The very active North Atlantic hurricane season, major monsoon floods in the Indian subcontinent and continuing severe floods in parts of east Africa contributed to 2017 being the most expensive year on record for severe weather and climate-related events. The secretary-general of the World Meteorological Organisation, Petteri Taalas, states that climate change is ultimately the cause.

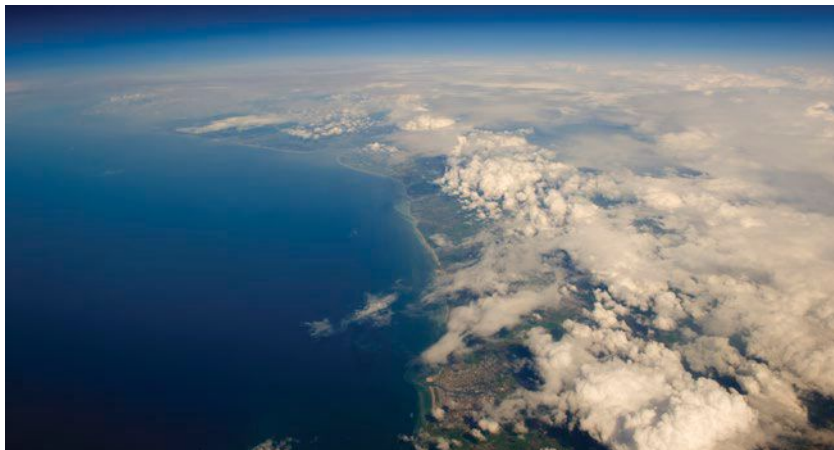
"In the past quarter of a century, atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide have risen from 360 parts per million to more than 400ppm. They will remain above that level for generations to come, committing our planet to a warmer future, with more weather, climate and water extremes."

Here are two extreme weather events that we won't want to repeat:

The North China Famine of 1876-79 was caused by a drought that led to crop failures. It resulted in the deaths of an estimated 9-13 million people.

The 1931 Yangzi-Huai River floods were a series of devastating floods that occurred in China. They were caused by melting snow and ice, coupled with heavy spring rain. Estimates of the total death toll range from approximately 422,000 to as many as 4 million.

WILL WE EVER CONTROL THE WEATHER?



being spoiled. In California clouds are regularly seeded with chemicals in an attempt to produce rain.

Yet, despite some limited success on a local basis Fleming warns that intervening in any weather system carries immense ethical considerations. "One of the pitfalls could be that trying to modify the weather in one place could actually cause a disaster elsewhere," he says.

Fleming reveals that following a secret cloud seeding experiment on the night of August 14, 1952, the seaside resort of Lynmouth in Devon was hit by torrential rain, causing a flash flood that killed 35 people and injured many more. He acknowledges, "it is impossible to say if cloud seeding really did trigger the flooding, or if it was just an unfortunate coincidence."

A few scientists have also proposed using satellites and laser beams to

control the weather but as Clive Hamilton, author of the book *Earthmasters*, points out, "These ideas are still in the realms of science fiction, and will almost certainly stay there."

"I don't think we ever will be able to control the weather in anything more than a superficial way. There are too many scientific variables to influence," explains Martin Bowles.

Williamson appears to agree with this assessment, concluding, "The low level of scientific attention given to weather modification would seem to fairly reflect its feasibility. Weather is what we get, usually much the same as what someone else has already had yesterday."

MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

Williamson also makes the point that, despite the inherent uncontrollability

**SECRET
WEATHER
WARFARE
IN VIETNAM**


Between 1966 and 1972 in the jungles over North and South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the US military conducted secret operations intended to generate rain and disrupt the Vietcong moving military supplies along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

A field trial, known as "Operation Popeye," first took place in 1966 and used aircraft to conduct cloud seeding over Laos. After it was judged a success, a much larger operational programme known as "Operation Motorpool," began on March 20, 1967 lasting until July 5, 1972. Over that period over 2,500 sorties were conducted from bases in Thailand over Vietnam, expending approximately 50,000 flares armed with silver and lead iodide into the clouds at an annual cost of \$3.6m.

James Roger Fleming writes in his book, *Fixing the Sky*: "Although some claimed that Operation Motorpool induced from 1 to 7 inches of additional rainfall annually along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, no scientific data were collected to verify the claim."

of weather, it's clear that long-term average weather (known as climate) has been unintentionally altered by human activity: burning coal, oil and gas, industry and agriculture. Indeed, such activity has increased the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere within our lifetime. In response, some scientists and engineers are now proposing that, as we've failed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, it's time to adopt a different approach, often called geo-engineering.

Dr Naomi Vaughan, senior research associate at the University of East Anglia, defines geo-engineering as "large scale modifications to the Earth's system in order to moderate climate change". In her opinion, geo-engineering consists of two broad approaches: firstly, those that seek to reflect more sunlight back to space to offset the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, known as solar radiation management (SRM). Secondly, those that work to directly remove greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, from the atmosphere.

The first approach, SRM, includes various ways to reflect sunlight, such as mirrors in space, aerosol injection of small particles of sulphate into the upper atmosphere, and marine cloud brightening, using ships to spray sea salt particles into low lying clouds.

The idea of artificially cooling the global climate by way of releasing particles of sulphur into

WILL WE EVER CONTROL THE WEATHER?



the stratosphere was popularised by Nobel prize-winning scientist, Professor Paul Crutzen in 2006, as a possible emergency measure to reduce runaway climate change.

Some Harvard scientists, backed by wealthy entrepreneurs such as Bill Gates are investigating whether geo-engineering or climate engineering is a way to modify or reduce the effects of climate change.

Kevin Trenberth, Distinguished Senior Scientist at the National Centre for Atmospheric Research in the US is highly critical of it, saying that “so-called” solar radiation management does not address the cause of climate change and has major side-effects that are undesirable. “Solar fiddling affects the incoming radiation. The problem is trapping outgoing radiation with an enhanced greenhouse effect. The effect on weather systems and the hydrological system are many and

our models are not good enough to predict the outcomes.”

He also highlights a central ethical dilemma: “Who makes the decision on behalf of all humanity and other residents of planet Earth to change the climate deliberately?”

In purely practical terms, could such a policy be implemented? There are geopolitical risks if any measures that affect global climate are carried out unilaterally, creating “winners” and “losers.” Moreover, creating an effective international governance structure is “unrealisable”, according to Vaughan.

The second approach includes technology fixes to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, such as using biochar to increase soil carbon and direct air capture and storage of carbon dioxide. Alternatively, some propose fertilising the oceans with iron to

encourage the growth of marine plankton. These marine plankton then absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, during the process of photosynthesis, when they convert light energy into chemical energy.

Unfortunately, even these methods have various drawbacks, ranging from side-effects to issues of cost, practicality and reliability. It is therefore hard not to agree with Hamilton when he says, "The essential difficulty with all carbon dioxide removal approaches is that they want to push a reluctant genie back into the bottle."

AS MARTIN BOWLES AT THE MET OFFICE sums up, "Geo-engineering is much less likely to be successful and is more difficult than changing

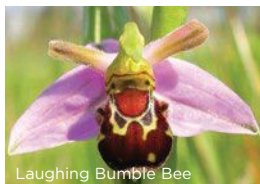
human behaviour/pollution to reduce the causes of climate change."

It is also important to realise that once humans take responsibility for managing the Earth's climate we can never relinquish it. That will be a heavy burden to bear, as Clive Hamilton warns: "The risks of its spinning out of control will always be high, because of the extraordinary complexity and inherent unpredictability of the global climate system".

It therefore seems that while we can affect some aspects of the weather, controlling it is likely to remain beyond our abilities. Those who wish to "manage" our climate are perhaps guilty of even greater hubris and, potentially, risk destabilising the earth's long term weather systems.

STRANGE FRUIT

These weird and wonderful flowers prove how limitless nature's imagination is



Laughing Bumble Bee



Darth Vader



Naked Man Orchid



Dancing Girls Impatiens



Hooker's Lips


*The controversial
appeal of*

Germany's Oldest City

BY TAMARA HINSON

Many of the tourists who visit the German city of Trier do so because of its link with Karl Marx, but the connection with the German philosopher is just one of several aspects which makes the destination, once one of the Roman empire's largest cities, unique





I'm standing in the centre of Trier, gazing at the Porta Nigra, an enormous Roman gate dating back to 170 AD, and the largest Roman city gate north of the Alps.

To my left is the house Karl Marx once lived in (ironically, given his hatred of money, it's now a "One Euro" shop) and, if I wander just a few hundred feet south, I can see the tip of the Basilika, the largest surviving single-room structure from Roman times. Built in 310 AD for Emperor Constantine, it's attached to the bright pink rococo-style Electoral Palace, built in 1615.

Trier has always been one of Europe's most culturally diverse cities. Luxembourg (home to the closest airport) is a 30-minute drive, Brussels is three hours away, and it takes three-and-a-half hours to get to Paris by train. Every day, 45,000 Trier residents commute to the tax haven of Luxembourg. And although only a hundred or so Luxembourgers work in Trier, a considerably higher number have made the city their home. I can see why. While Luxembourg's streets roar with super cars and are lined with banks and boutiques, Trier's pedestrianised city centre is filled with gabled houses, Roman ruins and tree-filled beer gardens where the majority of customers are locals, not tourists. Or at least that's usually the case.

GERMANY'S OLDEST CITY

“The city's shops are filled with Karl Marx memorabilia—everything from Karl Marx cookie cutters to Karl Marx rubber ducks”

THIS YEAR MARKS THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY of the birth of Karl Marx, widely regarded as the founder of socialism. The city's shops are filled with Karl Marx memorabilia—everything from Karl Marx cookie cutters to Karl Marx rubber ducks. In the city centre, a set of traffic lights displays not red and green men but tiny images of the bearded philosopher. Most of the museums have exhibitions providing insights into different aspects of his life, and attractions such as the Karl Marx House, where the thinker was born, are welcoming record numbers of tourists. One of the most popular



Clockwise L-R: The city centre, views from a Porta Nigra window, the Electoral Palace

spots is the enormous statue of Marx in the city centre. A present from the Chinese government, it was unveiled earlier this year. Marx has always been a controversial figure, especially in Germany, where thousands lived under the communist government inspired by his work.

Local officials rejected accusations that acceptance of the statue suggested the government was turning a blind eye to human rights abuses in China. Unbeknownst to the public, the Chinese government had initially suggested a much bigger statue, but a representative sent to China persuaded the commissioned



artist to downsize the statue by suggesting he base the dimensions on Marx's birth date: the fifth of May. The statue now stands at 5.5 metres tall.

At the nearby Karl Marx House, his birthplace, there's a huge metal bust of Marx. When I arrive, a group of Chinese tourists are posing for photos next to it, their clenched fists raised high for the camera. Marx's story is a complicated one, but the museum's interactive exhibits make the subject matter seem less daunting. In one room, a chandelier-like display of sand timers represents the length of time

GERMANY'S OLDEST CITY

he spent in different countries and German cities, and in another room, if I turn the pages of an enormous book, images and information about Marx magically appear. Some of the most priceless exhibits include a first edition of *Das Kapital* and the armchair in which he died.

But Marx's enormous pulling power (it's the reason it's the most-visited European city by Chinese tourists) is just one aspect which makes Trier unique. It's also home to the highest number of Roman ruins outside Rome, including the sprawling ruins of Roman baths and an amphitheatre. It's somewhat surreal, gazing along the length of the city's pedestrianised Simeonstraße, with its gabled, pastel-hued houses and taverns, to see the most famous ruin—the enormous Porta Nigra, or Roman gate.

MY GUIDE TAKES ME INTO THE

centre of the thick stone building and explains how approaching enemies would quickly be dispatched by bow-and-arrow wielding Romans positioned on the upper floors. Those who made it inside faced an even grislier fate—two huge doors would slam down, leaving them with no way to escape the vats of hot oil which would then rain down on them, courtesy of their Roman hosts.

Trier's Roman Basilika is just as spectacular—an enormous, cavernous space which dates



Trier's beautiful vineyards

back to 310 AD, built for Emperor Constantine. The original underfloor heating system, known as a hypocaust, is still occasionally used, although it takes three days to heat the interior to a temperature of 20°C. But the comfort of visitors was never a priority for the emperor. He installed windows made of opaque glass so that those who stepped inside would leave their shadow at the door, in the belief that it'd make them feel less powerful in his presence, an effect aided by the sparse interior, in which even the lightest of footsteps can be heard from the opposite end of the building. At Christmas time, when carols are sung, choirs perform under a special canopy designed to



“Emperor Constantine installed opaque glass windows so that those who stepped inside would leave their shadow at the door and feel less powerful”

reduce the echo, which can last up to seven seconds.

Apparently the Romans had no problem mixing business with pleasure, because the Trier Imperial Baths are just a short walk away. In the fourth century AD, wealthy residents would come here to sweat it out in the tepidarium with its underfloor heating or boost their circulation with a dip in the icy cold frigidarium. Then there was the caldarium—best described as a fourth-century jacuzzi, and a popular stop-off for Romans keen to soothe their aches and pains. Throwing vats of hot oil onto your enemies was hard work, after all.

My guide shows me an image

GERMANY'S OLDEST CITY



Travel Tips

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britishairways.com

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depicting the communal toilets and I develop a new-found appreciation for modern living. In the absence of toilet paper, visitors would use something known as a xylospongium, best described as a sponge on a stick. Those who weren't lucky enough to own their own would grab one from a communal bucket. But such hardships were nothing compared to the ones endured by the slaves who kept the place running. Beneath the ground floor were two networks of tunnels—one which doubled as a sewage network and one which contained the fires used to heat areas like the tepidarium. I know which tunnels I'd rather work in.

ON THE PLUS SIDE, EVEN THE

city's poorest residents could drown their sorrows at the end of the day, thanks to its location in the heart of the Moselle Valley, a region famous for its wine. Grapes blanketed the surrounding hills long before Karl Marx's family founded their very own vineyard. Archaeologists recently found a Roman grape pressing station in the nearby village of Piesport, and the slopes which surround the nearby town of Saarburg have been covered with vines for thousands of years. The hills here are so steep that grape pickers have been known to attach themselves to ropes in order to prevent accidental tumbles.

But it's not just wine which is produced in Saarburg, a short drive from Trier. Another major attraction in the pretty riverside town, nestled at the base of a castle-topped hill, is the Mabilon bell foundry, which opened in 1770. Bells were produced here until 2002, although the machinery is still maintained and still in working order. The foundry is now a museum, and on a tour of the workshop my guide shows me how the bells were moulded and fired, and reveals that the bells made here were once some of the best in the world. He points to one of the largest examples and explains that the length of the echo denotes the quality of the bell, adding that the larger ones have an echo

“Grapes blanketed the surrounding hills long before Karl Marx's family founded their very own vineyard”

which lasts for over two minutes.

Before I leave for the airport, I offload my remaining Euros with a spending spree at the tourist board's gift shop. My purchases? A bearded, *Das Kapital*-clutching Karl Marx rubber duck, a Karl Marx-shaped cookie cutter and an original Roman coin—a fittingly eclectic souvenir haul from an equally eclectic city.

TAKE A BREAK: UNDER THE SEA

Enjoy these photos by the winners of Underwater Photographer of the Year



My Great Escape: Unseen Ibiza

Michael Jones from London admires
the charms of Ibiza out of season

Tear up that Ibiza guide and forget what you think you know about this island. If you love nature and beauty, then Ibiza out-of-season is the place to visit.

Contrary to popular belief, summer isn't the only time to visit this "party" Isle. Spring or autumn can also be a wonderful time to go. Flowers are in full bloom, lavender covers the hillsides, and the weather is warm and sunny enough to visit the beaches.

Ibiza's best-kept secret lies in the second weekend of May. The medieval market explodes into action and The Dalt Vila transforms into its ancient past. Street vendors dress head to toe in medieval costume to sell artisan wares. It's an unforgettable and unique experience.

For an exhilarating trip, ride a bike along the coast to Playa d'en Bossa and head over a small footbridge straddling a stream. Pass the thick hillside forest to Es Cavallet where some beautiful rocky hilltops give an astounding vista of Dalt Vila.

Return at sunset along the Salinas

salt flats and you'll see a magical panorama that transports you to the rice paddies of Thailand, complete with a distant island outcrop.

If you prefer to make journeys by car, take a trip to Atlantis. Stop at the parking area for Torre de Savinar watchtower, and follow the path down to the sea. The carved rocks here made the Fortress in Ibiza town and forms what seems like a mystical lost city submerged in the sea.

Heading northeast, visit Greenheart at Casit Verde near San Jose. Sample delightful homemade vegetarian or vegan dishes and watch a spectacular show run by true Ibicencan hippies. In February and March, the dazzling white almond trees are in full blossom. It's this blossom that gives Ibiza its name, "the white island."

Travelling to Ibiza out of season is a delight you'll never forget. It's almost a secret best not told.

Tell us about your favourite holiday (send a photo too) and if we print it we'll pay £50.
Email excerpts@readersdigest.co.uk



The Dalt Vila
fortress at sunset

WILD SIDES

FOR "K" FANS:

AUSTRALIA

Twilight is the best time to see Australia's cute "K"s: koalas and kangaroos. Between November-February, guided groups of up to ten people can tiptoe across flat bushland close to Melbourne (echidnawalkabout.com.au).

FOR SHORT-HAULERS:

ITALY

The European Safari Company offers animal adventures closer to home, including wolf-tracking—plus ricotta-making and stargazing—in eastern Italy's rugged Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park (europeansafaricompany.com).

FOR TWITCHERS:

COLOMBIA

Birdwatching meets coffee and culture on Naturetrek's two-week tour, with endangered yellow-eared parrots, endemics like the indigo-capped hummingbird and classic Andean cock-of-the-rocks all hoped to feature (naturetrek.co.uk)



FOR APING AROUND:

TANZANIA

Moved to Rubondo Island on Lake Victoria in the 1960s, a group of chimpanzees are only now becoming comfortable enough with humans that we may watch them. Doing so is remarkable (asiliaafrica.com).



FOR BIG-CAT LOVERS:

SRI LANKA

While Yala grabs most headlines, northerly Wilpattu is Sri Lanka's best national park for spotting leopards thanks to sparser crowds and more of the cats. You might also see sloth bears and elephants (bambootravel.co.uk).

by Richard Mellor



Travel app of the month

TIMESHIFTER, FREE, ANDROID & iOS

Need to beat jetlag? There's an app for that. Enter your normal sleep patterns and flight plans, and Timeshifter will prescribe a schedule for easy transition to your new time zone.



PARTNERSHIP
PROMOTION

It's never too early to start thinking about the festive season

If you fancy a break over the festive season then why not join Solos Holidays on one of their special Christmas or New Year breaks and enjoy the opportunity to celebrate with fellow single and solo guests.

Dinner, dancing and large helpings of fun are all part of the celebrations and the evenings normally start with a glass of something refreshing at a reception before dinner. These social events are a great opportunity to mix and mingle.

STRATFORD CHRISTMAS MARKET

A wonderful way to start getting into the festive spirit on this 2 night Christmas market break. Wander under the twinkling lights whilst shopping for homemade gifts and sampling warming mulled wine, roast chestnuts or luxury chocolates. Explore historical Stratford-upon-Avon and enjoy dinner on both evenings where you can relax, join in the hotel's party night and hit the dance-floor with other solo guests.

Departure: 7th December

Price: £380, Half Board

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Head to the south coast and the bustling town of Brighton for a 3 night break this New Year. Celebrations begin with a Solos welcome drink before joining other hotel guests for dinner and musical entertainment. The next morning we take the fun 'Only in Brighton Tour' showcasing all things peculiar about Brighton, before New Year's Eve kicks off with a Gala dinner and party to take us into 2019.

Departure: 30th December

Price: £555, Breakfast & Dinner

To find out more about Solos Holidays Black Tie Balls, Party Nights, Dances & Festive Breaks that take place at venues across the UK throughout December:

call **0844 826 8515** or visit **solosholidays.co.uk**



Three Reasons It's Time To Change Bank

Ever wondered if you should switch bank accounts and—if so—how? Andy Webb offers a handy mini-guide on how to choose what's best for you

Like most of the country, you're probably still with the same bank you joined when you got your first current account. And no doubt you've got a few frustrations about the service you get. If that's the case there's a good chance you could be getting a better deal by opening up a new account elsewhere. Here's why you shouldn't stick, and how to switch.

1 Your local branch has closed

A growing annoyance is how many banks are closing the doors of local branches. It's all part of the move to online banking which can make most things a lot easier. But not everything. And if you still want to go

into a branch, then it might be time to move your business.

Obviously, if there's a rival bank that you can easily access, it makes it much easier to decide where to move.

2 You're not earning any interest on savings

It's been difficult to find decent interest rates on cash savings for a long time. Most ISAs and savings accounts have been around 1% at best, with many only offering a tenth of that rate, if not less. But, there's a number of current accounts which comfortably beat all of these, with **Nationwide** and **TSB** both offering 5% AER and **Tesco** offering 3% AER.

There are restrictions on how much you can earn the interest on, for example £2,500 with Nationwide, but this still beats your other options. You don't even need to switch bank to get these rates, you can just open up one or more new bank accounts.



Andy Webb is a personal finance journalist and runs the award-winning money blog, *Be Clever With Your Cash*



3 You can get paid to do it

Another incentive the banks are using to get you to move is a switching bonus. Deals change most months, but this year we've seen £150 from **HSBC** and £125 from **Natwest**. The money is deposited into your account after the switch is complete. It's not always cash, with some banks offering vouchers and gifts. At the time of writing you can get £125 in M&S vouchers and a further £5 in vouchers each month for a year by switching to **Marks & Spencer Bank**.

An alternative is to move to a bank which offers cashback on your bills, including Council Tax and energy. Both **Santander** and **Natwest** have these accounts. Although you do pay a monthly fee, you should cover this and more by the money you earn—though do check the online calculators to work out how much you could make.

4 How to switch bank

It's very easy to change bank. Though you can open more than one bank account, a full switch closes down your old account and moves your money over within seven working days. It also transfers any Direct Debits, standing orders and payments in for at least three years. Most high street banks and building societies have signed up to the Current Account Switch Service Guarantee which protects you if anything goes wrong and refunds any interest or charges incurred as a result of the switch.

My Mum's Money

BAD DIRECT DEBITS



Would you pay for something you don't use? Well, many of us do every month and don't even realise—thanks to Direct Debits. These payments which automatically come out of our accounts can make life a lot easier, and often cheaper, but it's also easy to forget they're there.

Every now and then my mum will check through these regular payments to see if she still needs whatever subscription or service it is. Recently she and my dad cut back from two weekend papers to one as they found they weren't reading both in full. It's a handy exercise to go through to save a few quid.

She'll also use this mini-audit to make sure she's not being charged for services she's stopped or switched away from. If she spots anything that's still active, even if no additional

payments have been taken, she'll call the bank and ask them to also cancel it.

Check too for any free-trials you've signed up to as you might not have realised that you've started to be charged. Of course, the Direct Debit goes both ways, so make sure you're not due any payments and refunds back from those companies first.

While we're on Direct Debits, do check you're not getting charged more for paying monthly. In most cases you do pay the same or save money, but for things like insurance you usually pay a premium. In these cases you're better off paying for the year up-front if you can afford it.

My mum's money tip:

If you don't do online banking you can ask your bank to post out a list of all your active Direct Debits.



Money Site Of The Month

TURN2US.ORG.UK

This useful website is run by a charity with the aim of fighting UK poverty.

As well as offering grants and a helpline, the **Turn To Us** website has a very handy calculator which works out what benefits you're entitled to. You might think you aren't someone who could claim anything, but there's a wider range than you might be aware of.

This could include Pension Credit and Winter Fuel Allowance for those over State Pension Age, or things like Carer's Allowance, Personal Independence Payments and



Bereavement Support Allowance for those of working age. Each can make a difference to your income and take pressure off your budgets.

The calculator looks at mean-tested benefits. This means any income, savings and other capital, such as a second home or any investments, is taken into account. You'll need details of all of these for the calculator. You also need to provide information about these for your partner, and any grown-up children who still live at home. You also need to be a British or Irish citizen living in the UK to get accurate results.

You can also search for charitable grants for yourself or others. These can be one-off or ongoing payments from a huge range of charities. Often they're linked to things like medical conditions, previous employment or where you live.

PECKISH PUPS



SOURCE: BORED PANDA.COM

Estate planning and Inheritance Tax

Estate Planning is much more than paying inheritance tax on the death of a loved one. Some want to provide for the next generation or leave money to a charity when they die, others want to ensure that HM Revenue & Customs won't be the biggest single beneficiary of their estate. Guy Myles answers these key questions

How is inheritance tax calculated?

Your estate will owe tax at 40% on anything above £325,000 inheritance tax threshold when you die.

Every tax-paying citizen in the UK benefits from a tax-free allowance, which is known as the Nil-Rate B (NRB). The current tax-free allowance of £325,000 is fixed until 2021.

In the event of death, if you are married or in a civil partnership, the entire value of your estate can be passed on to your spouse or civil partner free of any inheritance tax. In the event of the second death, your beneficiaries will be able to take advantage of the joint total NRB allowance of £650,000 to offset against the total estate value.



Guy Myles is CEO of pension and investment firm Flying Colours. If you have a question for Guy on dealing with divorce email pensionsguy@flyingcolourswealth.com

What do I need to know about passing on the family home?

With the recent surge in property prices, many people may find the value of their home and therefore their estate has gone above the inheritance tax allowance. If you leave your main residence to direct descendants after death you will gain an extra allowance of £125,000. This means the amount you can pass on before inheritance tax is due rises to £450,000. For a couple, this means £900,000 can be left to your family without inheritance tax being applicable. When it was introduced last year, the "Residence Nil Rate Band" was £100,000, rising to £125,000 in this tax year. Any unused nil-rate band can be transferred to a surviving spouse. This means £500,000 can be left without inheritance tax being due for an individual, and £1m can be left by a couple tax free.

What are RNRB Rules?

If you don't have any direct descendants, you are unable to benefit and are not entitled to this extra allowance. Also if you have an estate worth more than £2m, then

a tapered withdrawal will be applicable; this is £1 for every £2 over the threshold. And people with estates worth over £2.35m during the 2020-21 tax year will not get any relief.

How can I reduce inheritance tax?

You can reduce the amount of inheritance tax from 40% to 36% by gifting at least 10% of your net estate to charity. However, the most well-known option is to give away assets or money prior to your death. But those who die within seven years of giving a large gift may find tax is still applied. Another common way of mitigating inheritance tax is through investing elements of your estate into trust.

Pensions are an attractive means of avoiding inheritance tax. Your pension is deemed to be invested in trust, and as such, anything that is invested in a pension is deemed to be outside your estate for inheritance tax purposes. With the pensions freedom legislation making it far easier to pass benefits on to your family in the event of death, investing into a pension is an easy way to start mitigating inheritance tax.

What's the Importance of a Will?

It is important to ensure your Will is up to date. Having a Will ensures your wishes are carried out after your death. If you don't leave a will, the law decides how your estate is passed on and this might not be in line with your wishes.

What are the possible solutions?

- Make outright gifts
- Make gifts in trust
- Insuring for the potential Inheritance Tax liability
- Keep your assets while reducing the size of your estate
- Manage Inheritance Tax without making gifts
- Business Relief

If you don't plan for the eventuality that is inevitable for all of us, your family could be in for a nasty shock. It is not usually one solution but a combination of options that are suited to an individual's needs.

For more information you can download the Flying Colours Inheritance Tax brochure at **www.flyingcolourswealth.com/inheritancetax** or you can get in touch on **0333 241 9919** to speak to an adviser.



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• FOOD

Blackened Salmon And Tabbouleh

"Blackening" shouldn't always be associated with burnt barbecue sausages. It works particularly well in this salmon recipe, where the dark casing gives way to blush pink and beautifully cooked salmon, making it a dramatic dinnertime serve

Serves 4

- 1tsp hot smoked paprika
- 1/2tsp ground cumin
- 1/4tsp cayenne pepper
- 1/2 side salmon (500g)
- 4tbsp olive oil

For the salad

- 75g bulgur wheat
- 3tbsp olive oil
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 3 tomatoes, diced
- 120g flat-leaf parsley, picked & sliced
- 30g mint leaves, picked and sliced
- 6 spring onions, finely sliced



Rachel Walker is a food writer for numerous national publications. Visit rachel-walker.co.uk for more information

1. Mix the hot smoked paprika, cumin and cayenne. Brush the flesh side of the salmon with 2tbsp of oil, and sprinkle the spice mix over the salmon.
2. Turn your hob to the hottest setting and heat a frying pan until it's smoking. Put a square of baking parchment in the pan, which is roughly the same size of the salmon. Now, lay the salmon—flesh down—onto the baking parchment and leave it to cook for 8–10 minutes.
3. Once you can see an opaqueness creeping up 2/3 of the salmon flesh, lift the salmon out of the pan. Pour the remaining 2tbsp of olive oil into the pan and carefully flip the salmon into the pan skin-down this time, leaving it to cook for a final 5–6 minutes. Cover with foil and set aside to rest.
4. Cook the bulgur wheat according to pack instructions. Whisk the olive oil, lemon juice and zest in a mixing bowl, then add the other salad ingredients and toss through the bulgur wheat. Plate up and serve, feasting style, for a mid-week banquet.

Drinks Tip...

There's been a revolution in modern Spanish white winemaking, and there are few better examples than Galician albariño. The north coast is known for seafood wines—expect mouthwatering freshness, often a citrus sharpness and rich, apricot notes.



Cardamom Rice Pudding

With Plum Compote

1. Use half the butter to grease a 1.5 litre ovenproof dish and preheat the oven to 150°C.
2. Pour the milk in a saucepan and then add the cardamom pods and caster sugar. Stir over a gentle heat until the sugar dissolves and it's just starting to reach a simmer. Tip the rice into the greased ovenproof dish, cover it with hot milk, dot the remaining butter over the surface and put the rice pudding in the oven to bake.
3. Meanwhile, tip the water and soft brown sugar in a saucepan. Stir over heat until the grains dissolve and the syrup reaches a rolling simmer. Carefully add the plums, bring back to a simmer and cook for 2 minutes, then remove from the heat and leave the plum halves to sit in the hot syrup for a further 10 minutes. Spoon over portions of rice pudding and garnish with pistachio slivers. (Note, remaining plum compote can be covered and refrigerated for 5-7 days).

Serves 4

- 40g butter
- 1 litre milk
- 150g pudding rice
- 8 cardamom pods, crushed
- 50g caster sugar

For the plum compote

- 250ml water
- 100g soft brown sugar
- 600 plums, halved

Optional:

- pistachio slivers, to garnish



5 Reasons

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Modern Luxe

Combine contemporary designs with a rich colour palette and metallic accents to give your interior an on-trend, opulent update



Homes and gardens writer and stylist Cassie Pryce specialises in interior trends and discovering new season shopping

If you're looking to add a little wow-factor to your décor then you'll be spoilt for choice on the high street this season. From plush velvet sofas to sophisticated marble details, it's easy to recreate this look by carefully selecting a few key pieces to work into your home.

Start by considering your colour scheme and focus on picking out three jewel tones; one as the base colour and two more as accents. Indigo blue, emerald green or deep teal work well as a warm base colour, paired with fuchsia or saffron yellow as highlights, for example. When it comes to the smaller details,

introduce hints of gold or brass in accessories to add a lavish edge to your styling, whether that be through lighting, mirrors or glassware.

To up the style stakes even further and inject some drama, choose a bold wallpaper to hang on a feature wall. Go for a modern print with a simple repeat pattern, such as geometrics or graphic botanicals, and steer clear of anything too traditional or chintzy which could look dated. Mix and match different textures to build up depth and add interest to your space. Sumptuous velvet fabrics work well against sleek glass or marble furniture and this combination will allow the look to remain contemporary rather than overwhelming. Avoid cluttering surfaces with trinkets and give each piece of furniture breathing space, to let the colours and designs take centre stage.

Sitting Pretty

Percy armchair in deep turquoise cotton matt velvet, £790, sofa.com





Fabulous Garden Features

Every garden benefits from a touch of drama—and it takes so little to lift well-tended ordinariness into the memorable

Only too often you look around the garden and feel vaguely dissatisfied. Despite the time and care lavished, the money spent, something seems to be lacking, but what? One or more decorative features are needed to create interest and pull the design together. An element of drama or wit lifts the garden from the passable to the delectable level, giving a satisfying visual climax which may also be a talking point. This focal point can be a statue, an outstanding plant, a curious object that holds memories for you, or

some weathered hunk of wood. The choice and siting of a centrepiece needs sensitivity. To install anything out of character, bitty or fussy makes for a restless feeling, while the line between the amusing and the kitsch is narrow.

A focal point should be in sympathy with the period and construction of the house. Happily, objects that are simple or excellent in themselves tend to fit into any well-planned design, just as a contemporary sculpture suits a Georgian house and an antique rug a modern flat.

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Trouser Suits— Looking The Business



Lisa Lennkh is a banker turned fashion writer, stylist and blogger. Her blog, *The Sequinist*, focuses on sparkle and statement style for midlife women

I have a complicated relationship with trouser suits. For decades, they were my work uniform. You see, I worked in banking in the early 1990s when wearing dresses and skirts on a trading floor were a big no no; they invited the wrong kind of attention. The powerful androgyny of a trouser suit, however, made me feel less conspicuous as a young blonde woman in a predominantly male industry. It conveniently cloaked those parts of me that are obviously female and made me feel like I could "wear the trousers" literally and figuratively. Twenty years later, I might resent having to do this, but at the time it levelled the playing field as much as it's possible with fashion.

Since then, women have advanced into more positions of power. Wearing skirts and dresses is less of a liability in our current #girlboss era than it was on Wall Street in the 1990s. In addition, Silicon Valley's very casual dress codes have changed how we dress for work. Fashion has pushed the trouser suit to the back of its wardrobe for years.

Very recently, it has come out of hiding and has been given a colourful makeover and a slightly more relaxed fit than the ones I used to wear to work. Suddenly, a trouser suit looks cheerful, fresh, and pulled together...especially if worn in an effortless way with a tee shirt and a low heel or trainers. The punchier the colour and the easier the fit, the better. The modern trouser suit is a purposeful departure from the previous tailored dark uniform of bankers and politicians.

In fashion history, the two big moments for trouser suits were Coco Chanel wearing a men's one in 1929 and Yves Saint Laurent introducing the women's tuxedo suit, *Le Smoking*, in 1966. On the silver screen, I can't think of anyone who wore them better than Katharine Hepburn and Diane Keaton; they were both masters of unique androgynous style.

In my own closet, I have decided to add two recently. I'm probably late to the trouser suit party because after spending so many years of my career being stressed out in one, I had some



initial resistance! First, I bought an elegant oyster coloured satin backed crepe one that is very loose and flowy...completely different from the ones I used to wear in the 1990s. With good jewellery, it works well for smart evenings out and daytime meetings. With the sleeves pushed up, a low heel, and a casual tank top underneath, it nails effortless Katharine Hepburn chic.

I also just bought a bright green shiny satin one in a sale. I appreciate that it veers dangerously close to looking like a Quality Street sweet wrapper, but in my mind, that's the making of it. It definitely doesn't look effortless, but the green colour will mix well with brightly coloured accessories in the same way that foliage and flowers do. Both of my trouser suits are trans-seasonal; I wouldn't invest in a heavy wool or linen one because the fabrics are too limiting.

The right trouser suit is a great modern alternative to the "little black dress." It can take you all the same places but you have the benefit of choosing a more flattering colour *and* something that can be easily styled for daytime wear. Given my past, I certainly never thought I'd be wearing trouser suits for fun, but here I am contemplating whether my next one should be powder blue or orangey-red. In these colours, a trouser suit looks the business without looking too business-like.

Painted Love

Jenessa Williams travels back in time with this, like, totally bangin' trend

Fun, extravagant and colourful, the Eighties were an era where more meant more. Heels were high, silhouettes were extreme and cosmetics were applied with a heavy hand, reflecting an age where women fought to own their femininity and assert their power at the same time.

Before we resign ourselves back to shoulderpads, skin-tight leggings and home perm kits, the modern take on Eighties style is thankfully a little more subtle. In an increasingly dark world, we're craving the carefree approach to make-up and fashion once more, bringing zingy tones to our faces and wardrobes to show we mean business.

To ace the new approach, simply focus on one facial feature at a time, keeping the rest of the look neutral. Swap out your usual brown or black eyeliner for something a little more high-pigment—cobalts and mustards look great on darker skin, or try out a bold green or magenta if you're fair. As part of an exclusive deal with ASOS, **Crayola Beauty** have released a range of over 40 colours, packaged in creamy formulas that apply as easily as well, a crayon.

If eyeliner isn't your thing, try a new eyeshadow or lipstick in a primary



hue; just remember to apply a good primer or lipbalm before to avoid creasing and allow the colour to cling as long as possible.

In terms of hair, sleek bobs and straightened styles are being swapped for texture—lots of it. A chopstick curler is perfect for creating tight spirals that can be teased out with your fingers, or try a gentle crimp at the roots to create volume in thin hair. Whatever your technique, keep it bright, well-defined and whimsical. Your younger self would approve.

Hero Products

Crayola Beauty Face Crayon in "Dandelion", £9

Nars Eyeshadow in "Outremer", £18

Remington Keratin Radiance Wand, £23



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AMPLIFON IS LISTENING TO THE NEW GENERATION – Find out what makes you part of it.

Sound advice on Tinnitus

Six million Britons are living with tinnitus – but many feel they aren't getting enough help.

More than half of those who visited their GP with the condition were unhappy with the advice they received, according to research by the British Tinnitus Association. Eighty-eight per cent of those referred to an audiology unit reported having to wait up to four months for an appointment.

The good news is there are people who can help. Global hearing specialist Amplifon can quickly provide expert advice and hearing aids to bring respite from symptoms.

Studies suggest that hearing aids do reduce the effects of tinnitus for a significant number of people. By amplifying the sounds around them, aids can make the noises associated with tinnitus less noticeable for sufferers.

Amplifon can offer state-of-the-art digital aids that can be tailored to suit individual hearing needs and come with bespoke tinnitus programmes.



Judith Glasgow & Soozie Copley, Amplifon customers

The tinnitus was unnoticeable

A conversation with a friend proved life-changing for Soozie Copley after suffering with a noise like 'Niagara Falls' in her ears for years.

She had suffered from tinnitus following a childhood illness and had also developed age-related hearing loss, yet she struggled to find the right support.

When discussing her problems and the lack of help she had encountered with Judith Glasgow, her friend was keen to help. Judith a former teacher had also struggled to find effective hearing aids after finding it hard to hear when she was in groups.

Yet she had found her hearing was greatly improved after visiting Amplifon, so she suggested

Soozie give them a try too.

"It was a conversation that changed my life," says Soozie. "Judith gave me a wonderful recommendation and the treatment I received was just as amazing."

"The test was much more detailed than I'd had before and my audiologist allowed me to try lots of different hearing aids until we found a pair that would help my tinnitus.

When I first put the hearing aids in it was wonderful."

Soozie now goes back to her local branch every six months for the aids to be cleaned thoroughly and she says the aftercare has been second-to-none. "Nothing is ever a problem for them and they're always so welcoming," she says.

Such was her experience, she has since urged other friends to seek help from Amplifon and adds: "Now I have the 'Rolls-Royce' of hearing aids I've never looked back. The sound is so sharp and the tinnitus is unnoticeable." ■

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THE SEAGULL

Love, lust and family drama take centre stage in this supple adaptation featuring a stellar cast

In this clever and passionate adaptation of one of Russian dramatist Anton Chekhov's first major plays, a fading actress (Annette Bening) and her younger lover (Corey Stoll)—who's a successful writer—visit her ailing brother in the country, prompting a complex family drama to unravel.

While Stoll is undeniably magnetic in the notoriously difficult role of the writer, Trigorin, it is the formidable female trio of Bening, Saoirse Ronan and Elisabeth Moss who really steal the show. Each actress delivers an absolutely knockout performance that

glues you to the screen: Bening exudes grace and flair with every move she makes as the self-absorbed ageing actress Irina, Ronan wows with her emotive, exuberant performance as the *ingénue* Nina, and Moss displays perfect comedic timing and spunky sass as the lovelorn Masha.

All this is set to the warm glow of oil lamps in a quintessentially Russian *dacha* surrounded by lush forests, tranquil lakes and sunny meadows. Inspired and thoughtful, *The Seagull* is a breath of fresh air amongst tired, forced attempts at adaptations, and the perfect reminder that if there's anyone who can teach you about the unpredictable, tortuous nature of life—it's going to be Chekhov.



DOCUMENTARY: **FACES**

PLACES Iconic French New Wave director Agnès Varda (90) teams up with celebrated photographer JR (35) on a mission to make a film. What kind of film? They're not quite sure. All they know is that they want to take pictures and meet new people. And the end result is a whimsical journey that'll have you smiling non-stop. The peculiar duo travels through rural France, snapping photos of its various inhabitants and pasting them onto massive water towers, bunkers and barns, pausing every once in a while for a sincere heart-to-heart (that's never devoid of playful jabs). It's a film



that'll remind you that life is full of joy and beauty—all you need to do is switch your perception to the right frequency.



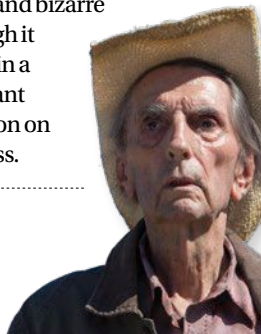
HORROR: **THE LITTLE STRANGER**

Based on a gothic novel of the same name, *The Little Stranger* follows a young doctor who develops a relationship with a local family living in a dilapidated mansion. As he supports them through a difficult time, he learns that there's something insidious hiding within their once-grand estate. Though atmospheric and intriguing to begin with, this spooky ghost story quickly runs out of steam.



COMEDY: *LUCKY* This offbeat little mood piece revels in its complete randomness. Lacking any solid narrative structure, it ticks all the following boxes: one of Harry Dean Stanton's final performances (the legendary actor died in 2017), a weird cameo by David Lynch, a tortoise in one of the lead roles, directorial debut from actor John Carroll Lewis (of *Fargo* fame) and a mariachi band. The film follows the day-to-day life of Lucky (Stanton) as he navigates the quiet, sometimes unsettling and bizarre world of old age. Though it loses focus every once in a while, *Lucky* is a poignant and very funny reflection on mortality and loneliness.

by Eva Mackevic



• TELEVISION



KILLING EVE: (BBC3, BBC1)

What is it? Europe-hopping thriller with a twist: the roles of mutually obsessed MI6 operative and Russian assassin are played by women. Think *Heat* in heels.

Why should I watch it? Phoebe Waller-Bridge first demonstrated her spiky gifts with 2016's *Fleabag*; here, serving as writer-producer, she's marshalled Luke Jennings' *Villanelle* novels into pacy, stylish entertainment.

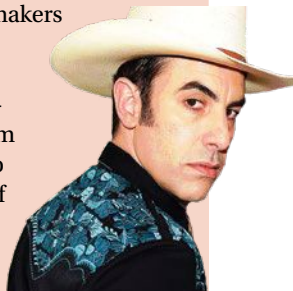
Best episode? The obsession builds steadily over eight shows, but episode three's deadly face-off in Berlin is particularly memorable.

WHO IS AMERICA? (CHANNEL 4, 4OD)

What is it? After *Borat* and *Ali G*, here's Sacha Baron Cohen's latest schedule-hijack, transmitted mere days after its surprise unveiling.

Why should I watch it? Sacha Baron Cohen's take-no-prisoners satirical comedy—exposing screaming senators and rabid racists alike—has already resulted in some of 2018's most jawdropping scenes. It's TV supremely attuned to our present tribal madness.

Best episode? Episode one's Kinder-Guardians segment is a brilliant example of taking a satirical line for a walk to see where it might go: the gun nuts and lawmakers Baron Cohen interviews in character as an ex-Mossad agent seem alarmingly keen to forward the idea of arming America's toddlers.



by Mike McCahill

WHAT TO STREAM THIS MONTH:

LAST MAN ON EARTH (AMAZON PRIME)

This narratively adventurous sitcom casts creator/star Will Forte as the one doofus who survived the apocalypse.

SACRED GAMES (NETFLIX)

Netflix India's adaptation of Vikram Chandra's epic novel unites characters from the worlds of law, disorder and showbiz.

SHARP OBJECTS (SKY ATLANTIC, NOW TV)

An atmospheric Gillian Flynn adaptation with Amy Adams on typically vivid form as a journo investigating a child murder.

ALBUM OF THE MONTH: HUNTER BY ANNA

CALVI Oh, Anna Calvi. The voice of an angel, the inner fire of a demon, the guitar skills of Jimi Hendrix. What's not to love? The British musician is back with her third, long-anticipated album produced by none other than Nick Launay (whose previous credits include Nick Cave, Lou Reed and Talking Heads—no biggie), and it's obscenely good.

As a general rule, most albums will feature a handful of solid bangers; three or five strong tracks followed by a number of mediocre, unmemorable ones. But not this one. *Hunter*

is consistently excellent, each song a standalone work of art. "Don't Beat the Girl out of My Boy," for example, is a plucky, riveting take on gender conformity; "Alpha" shamelessly allures you with a sexy beat and heated sighs, while "Swimming Pool" shifts gears with its operatic, psalm-like magnitude, offering a respite from aggressive rock riffs. Calvi's formidable vocal acrobatics keep taking unexpected turns, channelling everyone from David Byrne to This Mortal Coil and never failing to keep you on your toes. They're accompanied by toothsome guitars, feral drums and angelic synths, arranged with dazzling sophistication. *Hunter* is inspired, feisty and fresh, and it's hands down one of the best albums of the year.



by Eva Mackevic

READER RADAR: DAVID BENNETT, RETIRED PHOTOGRAPHER
WATCHING: BLUE PLANET II (BOX SET)

The episode on plastic pollution has ignited a much-needed debate on the problem.


ONLINE: CURRENT AFFAIRS

I try to keep up with world news—particularly the US. To describe the current administration there as “different” would be an understatement.

READING: FIRST MAN IN BY ANT

MIDDLETON I'm currently reading a book my wife, Ann, bought; reading it may help me to understand why Ann has taken such a sudden interest in our armed forces.

LISTENING: GREEN DAY Apart from buying a new bucket, the only other thing on my bucket list is going to a Green Day concert.

• BOOKS

September Fiction

Intrigue is the name of the game in this month's choices, with espionage and affairs aplenty...

Transcription

by Kate Atkinson (Doubleday, £20)

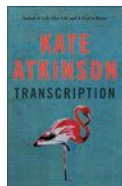
Kate Atkinson's previous two novels—*Life after Life* and *A God in Ruins*—were both dazzlingly good. But they were also rather tricky affairs, whose main characters lived out different versions of their possible lives. In *Transcription*, Juliet Armstrong lives just the one—but luckily for us it's certainly not dull. In 1940, Juliet joined a section of the secret service spying on those Brits who supported Germany in the war. What happened next is then revealed in a tantalising scene from the year of 1950, when she's a BBC children's producer—but may not have left the world of espionage as far behind as we thought (and she hoped).

Atkinson handles her mazy, le



James Walton is a book reviewer and broadcaster, and has written and presented 17 series of the BBC Radio 4 literary quiz *The Write Stuff*

Carré style plot with complete authority. But there's a lot more to the novel than its page-turning thrills. The increasingly sceptical Juliet makes for a very appealing heroine and the darker material is interspersed with some neat comedy. Above all, Atkinson recreates the atmosphere of both wartime and postwar London with utter conviction—and the deft use of telling details.



Love Is Blind

by William Boyd (Viking, £20)

William Boyd's protagonists are generally a globe-trotting lot—and *Love Is Blind's* Brodie Moncur is no exception. He may start the novel working quietly in a piano shop in 1890s Edinburgh but by the end, he's travelled through most of Europe, before pitching up in the Andaman Islands of India. He's also taken his place as Boyd's latest Scottish innocent abroad, discovering the



world is a lot more complicated, dangerous and fun than his “simple, strong, God-fearing” background in the Borders.

Once again, Boyd conjures up time and place so vividly that reading the book is a fully immersive experience. The characters are great too: among them, an exotic Russian singer who understandably captures Brodie’s heart, and his fantastically hypocritical preacher dad. More surprisingly, there’s a distinctly spicy and sometimes quite melodramatic plot, complete with a homicidal baddie, at least two love triangles and even a pistols-at-dawn duel.

The lessons that Brodie’s odyssey teaches him are perhaps not all that startling (that love is blind, for one). Nonetheless, this is another deeply satisfying and enjoyable novel from one of Britain’s most dependable literary craftsmen.

Name the author

Can you guess the writer from these clues (the fewer you need the better)?

1. He wrote the bestselling novel of the 21st century so far.
2. A later book by him—and another huge seller—has the same title as an epic poem by Dante.
3. The main character in both is Harvard professor Robert Langdon. **Answer on p128**

Paperbacks

Not That Kind of Love

by Clare and Greg Wise
(Quercus, £8.99)

Diagnosed with cancer in 2013, Clare started a blog—which her famous actor brother took over when she became too weak. A hugely affecting meditation on life, death and sibling love.

Some Kind of Wonderful

by Giovanna Fletcher (Penguin, £7.99)

Sharp, funny novel about a women returning (unwillingly) to single life.

What Happened by Hillary Rodham Clinton (Simon & Schuster, £10.99)

“I’m letting my guard down,” promises Clinton—and she’s as good as her word in this candid, even gossipy account of her election defeat.

Paper Ghosts

by Julia Heaberlin (Penguin, £8.99)

Might a man in an old people’s home have a murderous past? A particularly chilling and twisty example of that fast-growing genre: the Alzheimer’s-based thriller.

Paul O’Grady’s Country Life

by Paul O’Grady (Corgi, £8.99)

The TV presenter—and reformed townie—on his animal-filled life in Kent.

BOOKS

RD'S RECOMMENDED READ

Tougher Together

Keeping abreast with world news can give us a somewhat bleak view of the world. Yuval Noah Harari offers some cause for optimism...

Yuval Noah Harari's *Sapiens*—a history of humankind from our earliest beginnings—was a genuine publishing sensation: a global bestseller whose fans ranged from Barack Obama to Chris Evans. With the equally successful *Homo Deus*, Harari then headed into the future, explaining how the technological revolution might well create a new species of human beings. Now, in what's bound to be one of the biggest books of the autumn, he considers the challenges of the present day.

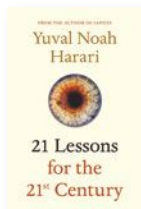
And as it turns out, there are plenty of challenges to consider. In fact, Harari suggests, the human race is facing "the hardest trials we have ever encountered"—and still with a brain best suited to hunting on the African savannah. By as soon as 2050, the



world could be completely unrecognisable, as technology takes over more and more work, leaving large numbers of people not so much exploited, as—worse—irrelevant. And of course this has implications for... well, virtually everything.

If this makes *21 Lessons* sound like a pretty alarming book, then that wouldn't be inaccurate. Yet, somehow it also manages to be an exhilarating one: compulsively readable and with almost every page providing something juicy to chew on.

At times, Harari even find grounds



21 Lessons for the 21st Century by

Yuval Noah Harari is published by Jonathan Cape at £18.99

for optimism—mainly because, for the first time, the world is becoming “one civilization”, more united in its essential beliefs than ever before. A thousand years ago, for instance, there were barely any countries—let alone ones with similar flags, anthems and shared ideas as to what a country is. We also agree far more than our ancestors did about the natural world and the human body...

“If you fell sick a thousand years ago, it mattered a great deal where you lived. In Europe, the resident priest would probably tell you that you had made God angry, and that to regain your health, you should donate something to the church, make a pilgrimage to a sacred site, and pray fervently for God’s forgiveness. Alternatively, the village witch might explain that a demon had possessed you, and she could cast the demon out using song, dance and the blood of a black cockerel.

In the Middle East, doctors brought up on classical traditions might explain that your four bodily humours were out of balance, and you should harmonise them with a proper diet and foul-smelling potions. In India, Ayurvedic experts would offer theories concerning the balance between the three bodily elements known as doshas, and recommend a treatment of herbs, massages and yoga postures. Chinese physicians, Siberian shamans, African witch

More Quotations From 21 Lessons

“If somebody describes to you the world of the mid 21st century and it *doesn’t* sound like science fiction—it is certainly false.”

“The best advice I could give a 15-year-old is: don’t rely on the adults too much. Most of them mean well, but they just don’t understand the world. In the past, it was a relatively safe bet to follow the adults, because they knew the world quite well, and the world changed slowly. But the 21st century is going to be different.”

“[According to some people] Humans may think and behave in various ways, but we should celebrate this diversity, and give equal value to all beliefs and practices. Unfortunately, such broad-minded attitudes cannot stand the test of reality... Few would see witch-burning, infanticide or slavery as fascinating human idiosyncrasies that should be protected against global capitalism.”

“Homo sapiens is a post-truth species, whose power depends on creating and believing fictions.”

doctors, Amerindian medicine men—every empire, kingdom and tribe had its own traditions and experts, each espousing different views about the human body and the nature of sickness, and each offering their own cornucopia of cures. Some worked surprisingly well, whereas others were little short of a death sentence. The only thing that united European, Chinese, African and American medical practices was that everywhere at least a third of children died before reaching adulthood, and average life expectancy was far below 50.

Today, if you happen to be sick, it makes much less difference where you live. In Toronto, Tokyo, Tehran or Tel Aviv, you will be taken to similar-looking hospitals, where you will meet doctors in white coats who learned the same scientific theories in the same medical colleges. They will follow identical protocols and use identical tests to reach very similar diagnoses. They will then dispense the same medicines produced by the same international drug companies. There are still some minor cultural

And the name of the author is...

Dan Brown, author of *The Da Vinci Code*—the 21st century's bestseller so far— and of *Inferno*.



"At least a third of children died before reaching adulthood"

differences, but Canadian, Japanese, Iranian and Israeli physicians hold much the same views about the human body and human diseases. After the Islamic State captured Raqqa and Mosul, it did not tear down the local hospitals. Rather, it launched an appeal to Muslim doctors and nurses throughout the world to volunteer their services. Presumably, even Islamist doctors and nurses believe that the body is made of cells, diseases are caused by pathogens, and antibiotics kill bacteria.

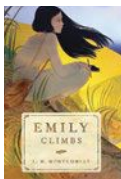
And what makes up these cells and bacteria? Indeed, what makes up the entire world? A thousand years ago every culture had its own story about the fundamental ingredients of the cosmic soup. Today, learned people throughout the world believe exactly the same things about matter, energy, time and space. Take for example the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programmes. The whole problem is that the Iranians and North Koreans have exactly the same view of physics as the Israelis and Americans. If the Iranians and North Koreans believed that $E = mc^4$, Israel and the USA would not care an iota about their nuclear programmes.

”

Books

THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Creator of the *Regeneration* trilogy, Pat Barker is known for her raw portrayals of survival. Her 13th novel, *The Silence of the Girls*, is published on August 30 by Hamish Hamilton



Emily Climbs

BY L M MONTGOMERY

When I read the *Emily* trilogy aged 11, I'd never come across anyone who had literary aspirations

like me. Emily gave me confidence to keep writing, though I sadly destroyed all my early childish attempts.

I remember so well the candlelit scene in which Emily agonises about her future; growing up in a strict Presbyterian household she's told she can't go to college unless she stops writing fiction. What a terrible choice.



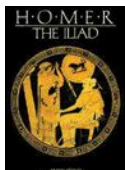
The Bluest Eye

BY TONI MORRISON

Published in 1970, Morrison's challenge was to write about poor black people in a way that

didn't stereotype or condescend to them. What language to use that doesn't alienate the reader? Too much phonetic dialect is difficult to understand and nothing puts a reader off like a worthy message. But

Morrison doesn't fall into these traps. The subjects she covers, from racism to rape, have made the book one of the most controversial of all time, with numerous attempts to have it banned.



The Iliad

BY HOMER

I have no classical background but since I first read *The Iliad* it has lingered in my mind.

I kept thinking about how the men do all the talking. When Agamemnon and Achilles quarrel over slave girls it's like listening to a very eloquent bar-room brawl. I thought the story could be re-told from a different point of view. What struck me on writing *The Silence of the Girls* is that there's nothing in *The Iliad* that isn't happening today, not just atrocities abroad but in this country where illegal immigrants are at the mercy of sexual predators because they dare not go to the authorities—in effect these women are slaves too.

As told to Caroline Hutton

Hi-Tech Hygiene

This month **Olly Mann** is investigating the gadgets that promise to up-grade your before-bed routine...

Running water and decent plumbing aren't typically considered hi-tech these days. Here's are four ways to smarten up your bathroom...

GET IMMERSED IN A EBOOK.

"Ah, but you can't take a Kindle in the bath, can you?" will be a familiar refrain if you've ever tried to persuade a committed bookworm to experiment with an e-reader. But to their horror, the **Kindle Oasis** (£229) can join you in the bath, because it's waterproof up to two metres.



Amazon have cleverly designed their new product for slippery fingers: physical page buttons on the side of the device can be used instead of the touchscreen when wet, and a book-like spine allows for surprisingly comfortable one-handed reading.

ZAP YOUR ZITS.

As a spotty teenager, I washed my face daily with Biactol, Oxy and Clearasil, which, I now concede, was perhaps overdoing it a bit.

If only I'd had a **Neutrogena Visibly Clear Light Therapy Acne Mask** (£59), I need not have exposed my pimply skin to harsh chemicals—rather, it blasts your face with acne-targeted light therapy.

Wearing it makes you feel like you're Michael Myers from the *Halloween* movies treating himself to a spa treatment, but it works.



Olly Mann presents *Four Thought* for BBC Radio 4, and the award-winning podcasts *The Modern Mann* and *Answer Me This!*

PIMP UP YOUR PEARLY WHITES.

There are plenty of decent electric toothbrushes for under £50. But, if you want the Rolls-Royce of oral hygiene, consider the **Philips Sonicare DiamondClean** (£329).

The eye-watering price tag is (partially) justified by some super-cool features, including five different brushing modes, a glass that wirelessly charges the brush, and a stylish carry case that can be docked with the USB port on your laptop.

KEEP YOUR KIDS COOL.

If you've got unwell children at home, and don't want to keep waking them up to prod them in the ears, the **Neurofen Fever Smart Thermometer** (£84) is a great gadget to keep in your bathroom cabinet.

Its flexible patch comfortably sticks to your child's skin, then sends data via Bluetooth to a compatible app, so you can track your kid's temperature for up to seven days on a single charge.



• FUN & GAMES

You Couldn't Make It Up

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ONE DAY, WHILE EXAMINING my hands, my eight-year-old commented, "Your fingernails are very yellow, Mummy." I thought I'd make light of the insult by adding that they matched my teeth.

"No, Mummy, they don't." I felt instantly better.

"Your teeth are green."

NICKY TORODE, Hastings

WHILST ON HOLIDAY WITH MY HUSBAND in Cyprus, we decided to hire a car to tour the island. Before the salesman handed us the car keys he said, "Remember please, the British drive on the left and the Cypriots drive in the shade."

ANITA SAUNDERS, Pentrebach

MY SISTER AND HER FIVE-YEAR-OLD grandson had come to my home for coffee and a catch up, following a two week break in Greece.

After numerous interruptions to our adult conversation, my sister gently rebuked her grandson by telling him he must wait for the conversation to end before he speaks.



Harrison looked at his grandmother and with a very sad expression said "But you two never stop talking !"

Out of the mouth of babes!

JANET CURL, Yorkshire

MY FATHER WAS HEADING OUT for a walk in a remote part of the countryside with my mother and some of their friends.

My mum commented that they probably wouldn't need the compass

but my dad retorted, "Bring it. It gets awkward when you have to start eating friends."

LEONA HECKMAN, *Denbighshire*

MY FRIEND REBECCA RECENTLY GOT MARRIED and not being blessed with culinary skills, asked her mother if she would give her the recipe for the wonderful casserole that she made for her large family of six at home.

Her mother accurately worked out to the nearest gram the amounts required for two people. When Rebecca had cooked it she rang her back and explained, "I divided the amounts by three and there didn't seem to be as much as we used to have at home!"

CATHERINE HISCOX, *Hertfordshire*

DURING A FAMILY WEDDING I decided to give Ethan, the five-year-old brother of the bride, a disposable camera to play with. Great fun was had as he continually clicked away recording his sister and family.

During the meal Ethan came over to me and said the camera was stuck. I checked and I could see he had used up all the film. I told this to him and his immediate response was, "Where's the delete button?"

IRENE MALONE, *via email*

I GOT TO MY FRIEND HARRIET'S house just after teatime and found her cleaning the rooms—the house looked spotless.

I was impressed and asked what had motivated her to do such a great job. Her simple reply? "No internet connection." **JESSICA WARD**, *Clapham*

MY NIECE WAS MOVING FROM HER house to a property about 15 miles away. The move went very smoothly apart from the fact that one of her cats could not be found.

My sister returned to the empty house after work, and there in the kitchen was the black and white cat. She placed the cat into a basket without any fuss and drove it the 15 miles to its new home. My sister was talking to him all the time to reassure him about his new home. On arrival my niece looked into the basket and said "...that's not him!"

So my sister then had to return the intruder, collect the correct cat and adjust the cat flap so the intruder could not re-enter. It should have been a simple job...

PATRICIA GUYATT, *via email*

A NEIGHBOUR COMMENTED ON the number of times my husband and I went to the gym a week and congratulated us for our commitment to getting fit.

I quickly had to burst her bubble though and told her as I couldn't drive, my husband had to take me. While I was after a flat stomach, all he wanted was a flat white while he waited for me!

GINETTE HUGHES, *Hertfordshire*

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IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

In 1912, Captain Robert Scott made it to the South Pole—only to find that the Norwegian Roald Amundsen had beaten him by a month. Two months later, Scott was dead. All of the words below would have been familiar to his team, but how many do you know? Answer A, B or C.

BY HARRY MOUNT

1. narwhal *n.*—A: climbing rope.
B: small polar whale. C: fur blanket.

2. harp seal *n.*—A: Antarctic musical instrument. B: mythical sea creature. C: Greenland seal.

3. langlauf *n.*—A: cross-country skiing. B: ice bridge. C: long sledge.

4. pemmican *n.*—A: small penguin. B: dried meat in melted fat. C: fishing knife.

5. pack ice *n.*—A: solid mountain of ice. B: crowded chunks of floating ice. C: shards of ice.

6. skua *n.*—A: false horizon B: rifle. C: polar bird.

7. parka *n.*—A: hooded jacket. B: small igloo. C: ice slicer.

8. careen *v.*—A: to turn a ship on

its side. B: insulate with animal fat. C: stitch tightly.

9. alpenstock *n.*—A: muesli. B: mountain hut. C: iron-tipped hill-walking stick.

10. beluga *n.*—A: fat reserve. B: fish egg C: type of whale.

11. harpoon *n.*—A: ship's whistle B: barbed missile. C: grooved needle

12. theodolite *n.*—A: warm spring. B: Antarctic mineral. C: specialised surveying instrument

13. aurora borealis *n.*—A: foliage. B: northern lights. C: warm glow.

14. schuss *v.*—A: to ski straight. B: suffer from frostbite. C: melt ice.

15. husky *n.*—A: fur collar. B: tea urn. C: sledge-pulling dog.

Answers

1. narwhal—[B] small polar whale. "Narwhals were prized for their unicorn-type horns."

2. harp seal—[C] Greenland seal. It got its name from the harp- shaped mark on its back.

3. langlauf—[A] cross-country skiing. "They had to use *langlauf* skis on the flat, snowy plain."

4. pemmican—[B] dried meat in melted fat.

5. pack ice—[B] crowded chunks of floating ice.

6. skua—[C] Polar bird. "Skuas are predatory seabirds."

7. parka—[A] hooded jacket. "Eskimos wore *parkas*."

8. careen—[A] to turn a ship on its side. "The boat *careened* through the freezing storm."

9. alpenstock—[C] iron-tipped hill-

walking stick. "She was fit enough to take on the hill with her *alpenstock*."

10. beluga—[C] a type of whale. "Hungry polar bears feed on *beluga* whales."

10. harpoon—[B] barbed missile. "They used *harpoons* to hunt whales."

12. theodolite—[C] surveying instrument. "The *theodolite* measures horizontal and vertical angles."

13. aurora borealis—[B] northern lights. "The *aurora borealis* glowed and swirled in the Arctic night air."

14. schuss—[A] to ski straight. "What a pleasure to *schuss* down from the Arctic hills!"

15. husky—[C] sledge-pulling dog. "*Huskies* don't mind snow."

WORD OF THE DAY*

ERINACEOUS:

Someone or something resembling a hedgehog

Alternative suggestions:

"Prime example of how to get all the vowels in one word by the Royal National Consonant Society."

"Erin's airy and spacious new home"

VOCABULARY RATINGS

9-11: Getting there

12-13: Impressive

14-15: Wizard!

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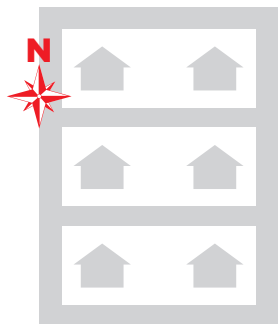
• FUN & GAMES

Brainteasers

*Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles,
then check your answers on page 139.*

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBOURHOOD (Difficult)

Each of the six people quoted below live in one of the six houses in the neighbourhood shown. The houses are white, brown, green, blue, yellow and orange. Assuming that everyone is telling the truth, whose house is painted which colour?



Mrs. Antonini: Mrs. Borden lives due north of me.

Mrs. Borden: I live in the orange house. I can walk to Mrs. Englehardt's house without crossing any streets.

Mr. Cruz: I live due east of a green house.

Miss Dubois: There's a white house north of mine, but I can't see it from my house because there's a brown house in the way.

Mrs. Englehardt: I live directly across a street from both a yellow house and a white house.

Mr. Fung: I live in the green house.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES (Moderately Difficult)

You need to acquire at least six pencils, six pens and six erasers for £5.20 or less. If the packages listed below are the only combinations that are available, which do you take? You can buy more than one of the same package.

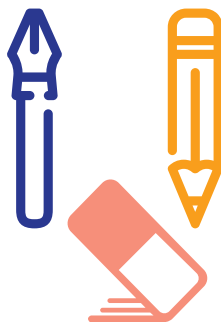
A: Two erasers for £0.70.

B: Four pencils, one pen and two erasers for £1.30.

C: Three pencils, four pens and three erasers for £3.20.

D: One pencil, three pens and two erasers for £1.90.

E: One pencil and five pens for £2.30.



(Moderately difficult)

Place one of A, B, C or D into each of the 25 empty cells so that the quantities of letters in each row and column are as indicated by the numbers. Identical letters cannot be next to each other either horizontally or vertically. Can you complete the grid?

				A	1	2	2	1	1
				B	1	0	2	2	1
				C	3	1	0	1	1
A	B	C	D		0	2	1	1	2
1	0	2	2						
3	1	0	1						
2	2	1	0						
1	2	1	1						
0	1	2	2						

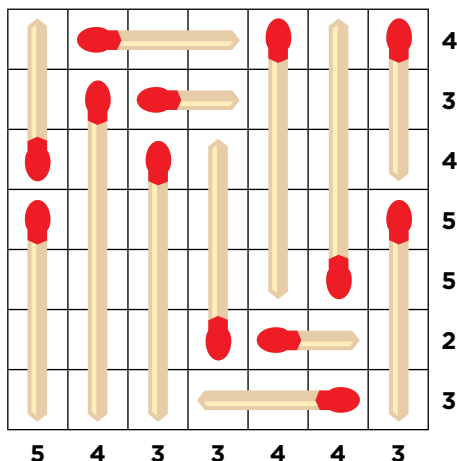
PENNY (....) BOARD

WORD PLAY (Easy)

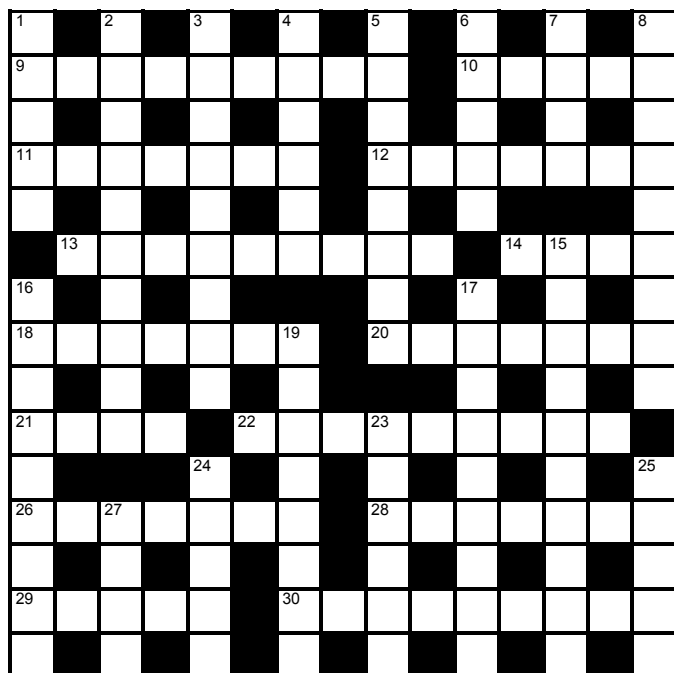
Can you create two new words or familiar phrases by placing another word after the first and before the second?

MATCH PLAY

(Moderately difficult)
This grid contains matches of different sizes, any of which may be completely unburned, partially burned or completely burned. Matches burn from the head (the red end) to the tail without skipping segments. The numbers outside the grid indicate the number of burned segments in the corresponding row or column. Can you shade in the burned segments to “match” the numbers?



BRAIN TEASERS



CROSSWISE

Test your general knowledge. Answers on p142

ACROSS

- 9 Playwright (9)
- 10 Moor (3,2)
- 11 Space surrounding an altar (7)
- 12 Quickly (7)
- 13 Runner (9)
- 14 Cougar (4)
- 18 Distinct sort or kind (7)
- 20 Surgical knife (7)
- 21 A great deal (4)
- 22 Herald (9)
- 26 Hedge (7)
- 28 Books of maps (7)
- 29 Young hooter (5)
- 30 Abbreviated (9)

DOWN

- 1 Decree (5)
- 2 Executives (10)
- 3 Biting (9)
- 4 Fiddle (6)
- 5 Old liners (8)
- 6 The Roman Empire's home country (5)
- 7 Large mass of floating ice (4)
- 8 As thumbs are (9)
- 15 Disagreeable (10)
- 16 Psalter (5,4)
- 17 Moon (9)
- 19 Astonishment (8)
- 23 Lea (6)
- 24 Threescore (5)
- 25 Stage whisper (5)
- 27 Depend (4)

Brainteasers: *Answers*

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Antonini: blue. **Borden:** orange.
Cruz: white. **Dubois:** yellow. **Englehardt:** brown. **Fung:** green.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Buy one B and two Ds for \$5.10.

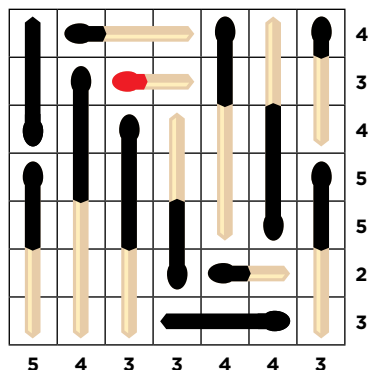
CROSSED LETTERS

C	A	D	C	D
A	D	A	B	A
C	A	B	A	B
B	C	A	B	D
C	D	B	D	C

WORD PLAY

Black.

MATCH PLAY



£50 PRIZE QUESTION

Answer published in the October issue

Rearrange these letters to form a
single word

GRIM AREA



The first correct answer
we pick in August wins
£50!* Email **excerpts@
readersdigest.co.uk**

ANSWER TO AUGUST'S PRIZE QUESTION

ORCHESTRA CARTHORSE

AND THE £50 GOES TO...

Jeff Pepper,
Devon

• FUN & GAMES

Laugh!

Win £30 for every reader's joke we publish! Go to readersdigest.co.uk/contact-us or facebook.com/readersdigestuk

I SAW A POST FROM THE ANIMAL charity PETA the other day. It had a picture of a puppy and a cow with the caption, "Why do we love one and not the other?"

I don't know where PETA lives, but my landlord has very strict rules about cows in the house.

SEEN ON REDDIT

GARDENING IS LIKE telling nature, "Hey, you know who would be better at your job than you?"

"...Me!"

COMEDIAN DAVID SUTTON

THE SHAPE OF WATER TAUGHT ME that it doesn't matter if you're a giant fish monster, there's still a woman

out there who will find you attractive. As long as you're over six feet tall.

SEEN ON REDDIT

A WEDDING REGISTRY IS REALLY just the worst Christmas ever.

My fiancée tells me, "We can register for anything."

"Anything?"

"Anything!"

"Can we register for a drone?"

"No. Now tell me which set of serving spoons you like best."

COMEDIAN KEVIN ISRAEL

I'VE LIVED 50 YEARS OF MY LIFE without peppermint oil. I'd hardly call that essential.

SEEN ON REDDIT

Sign Language

These hilarious airport signs could make waiting for your flight more bearable...
(via sadanduseless.com)



I'VE LIVED IN NEW YORK FOR just under 12 years now. And I'm certain that in that time, just bit by bit, I've inhaled one full pigeon.

COMEDIAN ERIK BERGSTROM

I'M TIRED OF PEOPLE SAYING THAT they're better than McDonald's. You may have never set foot in McDonald's. Maybe instead of buying a Big Mac you read gossip magazines. Hey, that's still McDonald's, it's just served up a little different.

Maybe your McDonald's is telling yourself that your Starbucks Frappuccino isn't a milkshake, or maybe you watch Hollyoaks. It's all McDonald's. McDonald's of the soul. Momentary pleasure followed by incredible guilt.

SEEN ON FACEBOOK

DO YOU THINK THAT CAPTAIN Hook used to be called Captain Hands?

COMEDIAN ERIK BERGSTROM

I ONCE PEED MY PANTS IN secondary school. All the kids were laughing at me.

I told them, "Stop laughing! I'm

your teacher and I demand your respect!"

COMEDIAN ZACH BRAGG

DINOSAURS BECAME VEGAN and look how they ended up—ten inches tall and pooping on statues.

No thanks. COMEDIAN INGRID ELKNER

MY FIRST JOB WAS SELLING doors, door to door. Now that's a tough job isn't it?

Bing bong...

"Hello, can I interest you in a—oh s**t, you've already got one haven't you? Well never mind..."

COMEDIAN BILL BAILEY

I HATE ASTROLOGY SO MUCH that whenever anyone asks me my sign, I lie and say Leo.

And then, after they spend the next hour telling me how they just *knew* I was a Leo, I tell them that I was actually lying the whole time and that I'm actually a Virgo.

The problem with that is they then laugh knowingly and say, "That is *such* a Virgo thing to do!"

COMEDIAN TOM GANNON



LAUGH

Summer Of Sad

Tweeters reveal their worst ever summer jobs:

@MobsterLobster: "When I was ten, my grandfather paid me to be a human scarecrow on his farm. I stood in the sun shouting at birds for an hour before my mum yelled at him."

@JBest3435: "I was a lifeguard at a 3ft deep pool. If someone claimed they were drowning, I just yelled, 'Yo, stand up!'"

@Mollie_Galvez: "I would take 'Made in China' stickers off things for my grandma so she could sell them for more at her craft show."

@KM_Belland: "I had to dress as a bison at a museum and be 'hunted' by hordes of five-year-olds. Once after being captured, a kid yelled, 'It's still alive,' then punched me in the face."

MY INSOMNIA HAS GOTTEN REALLY
bad recently.

But on the plus side, only three more sleeps until Christmas!

TRACY DAVIDSON, Warwickshire

GIVING A NEW ROMANTIC PARTNER MY
Netflix password is like me giving her a bouquet of flowers.

The difference with Netflix is that I can control if/when the flowers die.

COMEDIAN MATEEN STEWART

IF I HAD JUST ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE
myself it would be sad.

Not the word "sad". It would be sad to have just one word.

The word I'd choose would be "sadder".

COMEDIAN KEVIN L SCHWARTZ

WHEN I GO TO A WEDDING, I NEVER
seal the money envelope I bring for a gift.

That's because if the wedding turns out to have a cash bar, I can use that money to pay for the overpriced drinks.

COMEDIAN DAN REGAN

WHY DID THE SUPERSTITIOUS CHICKEN
GO TO THE SÉANCE?

To get to the other side.

SEEN ON PINTEREST

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Across: 9 Dramatist, 10 Tie up, 11 Chancel, 12 Allegro, 13 Messenger, 14 Puma, 18 Species, 20 Scalpel, 21 Lots, 22 Trumpeter, 26 Barrier, 28 Atlases, 29 Owllet, 30 Shortened

Down: 1 Edict, 2 Management, 3 Sarcastic, 4 Violin, 5 Steamers, 6 Italy, 7 Berg, 8 Opposable, 15 Unpleasant, 16 Psalm book, 17 Satellite, 19 Surprise, 23 Meadow, 24 Sixty, 25 Aside, 27 Rely

60^{Second} Stand-Up

We chatted to the hilarious and versatile stand-up comedian, Hal Cruttenden



WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF YOUR CURRENT SET? It's so cheesy but the best part of any [set] is always the time you're on stage.

WHO INSPIRES YOUR COMEDY? My wife and kids are always a big part of my act. I live in a house of people who are funnier than me so it's very handy—it's beneath all of them to be stand-ups, so I'm the only one who does it.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ONE-LINER? My kids have spent their whole lives in England, yet they still see themselves as Northern Irish because of their mum. And, to be honest, I see them as Northern Irish—they're always arguing and economically it makes no sense to keep them.

DO YOU HAVE ANY FUNNY TALES ABOUT A TIME YOU BOMBED ON STAGE? I did one gig where I was doing so badly—this was a long time ago before I was brilliant—and I was

dying on my a**e so I said I'm going to go. They cheered and applauded and I said, "For the record I've got a standing ovation" and walked off.

DO YOU FIND ANY PARTS OF THE COUNTRY TO BE FUNNIER THAN OTHERS? One place that takes abuse terribly well is Essex. I think it's one of the best places to do comedy in. They don't have a sensitivity about themselves as an area at all whereas other parts of the country do.

IF YOU COULD HAVE A SUPERPOWER WHAT WOULD IT BE? I'd like to be able to walk my dog in half a minute but the dog thinks it had gone on a two hour walk because that annoys me, taking it out in the middle of the day.

Hal Cruttenden: Chubster will be at Pleasance Courtyard throughout August as part of Edinburgh Fringe and on tour nationwide from September. Get tickets at halcruttenden.com

LAUGH

Beat the Cartoonist!



Think of a witty caption for this cartoon—the three best suggestions, along with the cartoonist's original, will be posted on our website in mid-September. If your entry gets the most votes, you'll win **£50**.

Submit to captions@readersdigest.co.uk or online at readersdigest.co.uk/caption by September 9. We'll announce the winner in our November issue.

July's Winner

It was neck and neck this month, but our cartoonist came in second with his caption: **"Oh what the hell!...rip the filter off."** This month's crown goes to our reader Tracy Davidson, who won with 35 per cent of the vote. Her caption: **"My mother always said cigarettes would be the death of me"** got you all voting. Congratulations Tracy!



In the October Issue



Interview: Jane Hawking

We speak to the author and former wife of science legend Professor Stephen Hawking



Time Travel Is Possible

We meet the cos-players who spend their time reenacting times gone by

Plus

BEST OF BRITISH: STREET ART

Not all good art is confined to galleries and museums...



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